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Editor : A. C. SUKLA
B-8, Sambalpur University, Jyoti Vihar, Orissa
India - 768019, Phone : +0663+430314, Fax : 0663+431915
E-mail: anantasukla@hotmail.com

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Milton H. Snoeyenbos
Department of Philosophy
Georgia State University
Atlanta : Georgia 30303, U.S.A.

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dlokanathdora@rediffmail.com

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The present volume felicitates the 83rd Birth Day of Professor John Hospers

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CONTENTS

Uppinder S. Mehan	1 13	Transgressing Bodies in Postcolonial Fiction
Kenneth Asher	15-25	The Lawrentian Vision of Martin Amis' *London Fields*
Marie-France Hilgar	27-32	The Peregrinations of Saint Mary of Magdalen
Helen F. Maxson	33-43	Wallace Stevens's " Necessary Angel of Earth" at Work in Three Paintings
M. Dasan	45-53	The Poetry of Re(z)sisters: First Nations Women and Stri Dalit Poetry: A comparison.
Lorna Fitzsimmons	55-60	Artistic Subjectivity in Nabokov's *The Defense* and *Invitation to a Bēheading*
Martin Wasserman	61-74	Kafka's "The New Attorney": A Therapeutic Poem Offering a Jewish Way to Face Death
Ranjan Ghosh	75-88	Towards a Concept of the Poet in the Vedic Aesthetics
Wolfgang Ruttkowski	89-125	"East and West" and the Concept of Literature

Book Reviews by
Michael H. Mitias, A.C. Sukla, B.C. Dash, Sanjay Sarangi, K.C. Dash.

Books Received

Transgressing Bodies in Postcolonial Fiction

UPPINDER S. MEHAN

> Thus because of the "Indian Wonders" the eyes and imagination of medieval man were accustomed to grotesque body. Both in literature and pictorial art, the body of mixed parts and the strangest anatomical fantasies, the free play with the human limbs and interior organs were unfolded before him. The transgression of the limits dividing the body from the world also became customary. (Bakhtin 347)

Issues of control and transgression are central to the question of social praxis. That "deviant" sex and the grotesque body are the preferred symbols of transgression is "natural", given the attempts to legislate both through legal and normative means. Cultural critics have underscored the usage of deviancy (variously defined, but commonly against an assumed homogeneous bourgeois norm) in contemporary film and music to protest middle-class values. Similarly, literary critics have made salient the figure of the sexual/class/gender/racial transgressor in literature by focusing on the marginal and the grotesque. My focus in this paper is on the inappropriate use of the body and sexuality as symbols of transgression in postcolonial fiction. Through a case study of Mulk Raj Anand's first novel *Untouchable* and his latest novel *The Bubble*, I ask for a more considered approach to the use of the transgressive body in critiques of postcolonial texts. The western trained literary critic interested in exploring issues of the body and transgression in postcolonial literatures1 , all too often, hastily and mistakenly transfers the equation of "grotesque is to creative texts as protest is to complacency" to a context where historical circumstances make it foolish at worse and inconsequential at best. I suppose I could claim that such a manoeuvre brings with it a new version of the West's colonial impulse but that would be to employ one of contemporary criticism's more unworthy tropes.

Much contemporary critical thought calls for the use of the Bakhtinian grotesque body as a sign of transgression against a socio-political order, but in much early postcolonial fiction, and certainly in Anand's *Untouchable*, this function is served by the classical body. I make use of 'grotesque' and 'classical' bodies following Stallybrass and Paton's use of Bakhtin's concepts of the grotesque and the classically beautiful body.

> The classical statue has no openings or orifices whereas grotesque costume and masks emphasize the gaping mouth, the protuberant belly and

> buttocks, the feet and the genitals. In this way the grotesque body stands in opposition to the bourgeois individualist conception of the body, which finds *its* image and legitimation in the classical. The grotesque body is emphasized as a mobile, split, multiple self, a subject of pleasure in processes of exchange; and it is never closed off from either its social or ecosystemic context. The classical body on the other hand keeps its distance. In a sense it is disembodied, for it appears indifferent to a body which is 'beautiful', but which is taken for granted. (Stallybrass 22)

Where Stallybrass and Paton use Bakhtin's grotesque and classical bodies to analyze bourgeois anxieties, I use them to denote postcolonial ones. Postcolonial critics such as Derek Wright, Elleke Boehmer, Stephen Slemon, and Jean M. Kane have pointed out that the body in pre-independence postcolonial fiction is constructed as a whole, unified body, whereas, the body in post-independence postcolonial fiction is fragmented (the bodies they refer to as 'whole' or 'unified', I refer to as classically beautiful, and the bodies they refer to as 'fragmented,' I refer to as grotesque, or, as Bakhtin puts it, grotesque images are "ugly, monstrous, hideous from the point of view of 'classic' aesthetics, that is, the aesthetics of the ready-made and the completed") (Bakhtin 25). Various explanations are offered for the dichotomous representation of the body, but most postcolonial critics agree that the classically beautiful body is constructed in keeping with the nationalist project of creating a reversal of the colonizer's construction of the native as a grotesque; the fragmented body is used in order to show that "sectarian conflict, inequities of the class and gender, and neocolonial politics hobble the promise of independence as the commencement of a utopian wholeness" (Kane 95). The transgressive use of the grotesque body against the national politics of a post-independence India can be found in the works of younger writers such as Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh.

In keeping with conventional critical understanding, once colonial rule with its binary that sees the native as grotesque passes so, too, does the use of the classical body as the symbol of transgression. Unfortunately, the scheme is far too reductive. It cannot, for example, make sense of the post-independence postcolonial text that uses a classical body as the symbol of transgression such as Emecehta's *The Joys of Motherhood* or David Malouf's *Remembering Babylon*, or more problematically, a text such as Erna Brodber's *Myal* in which both the classical and the grotesque body are used as symbols of transgression.

> The post- colonial in literature and critical discourse essentially consists of the cultural representation of the destabilization of the fixities and bounded structures of the age of empire and colony under British and European world hegemony. (Jeyifo 52)

One important force of destabilization has been the various nationalist movements. As the former colonies have sought and achieved independence their nationalist movements have brought about a re-construction of the configuration of power in their territories. Given the central place of nationalism in the independence struggles of countries such as India, Nigeria, Kenya, it is not all surprising that literature from such areas foregrounds nationalism. 'Nationalism', in the case of the formerly colonized seeking decolonization, is identified with the anti-fascist, anti-imperial, leftist vocabulary of European socialism. After 1945, mostly, 'nationalism' is increasingly identified with the political state that seeks to either expand its territories or stabilize its base against internal dissidents; it is often seen as being repressive itself (Hobsbawm 120-162).

The texts I'd like to examine, Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) and *The Bubble* (1984), seem to perfectly embody the critical frame I wish to criticize. In the pre-independence *Untouchable*, Anand's first novel, control of the body indicates self-control, discipline and courage. In the post-independence *The Bubble*, Anand's latest novel, control of the body is viewed as repression. The body's sexual freedom, primarily, is seen at the outset of the novel as the pre-condition of a new way of being in the world -- a more honest and direct way. However, by the end of the novel the narrator sees that false freedoms offered by such a view for what they are and proposes a greater self-discipline. The crucial difference between control of body as represssion and control of body as self-control is the intent of the control. The intent of self-control at the end of the latest novel is for honest self-respect and respect for others.

From *Untouchable* to *The Bubble*, Anand explores the conditions of being in relation to the cultural dynamics and political structure of India. Anand has never been apologetic about his political and social concerns:

> I immersed myself in the subworld of the poor, the insulted and the injured, through continuous pilgrimages to the villages, the small town and the big *bastis* of our country. I had to journey away from the Bloomsbury literary consciousness to the non-literary worlds, whose denizens have always been considered 'vulgar' and unfit for respectable worlds.' (*Conversations* 16)

Anand's journey away from the Bloomsbury group is, however, a return journey. His mid-career novel, *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, is a careful blend of the social and the personal and his later semi-autobiographical novels (of which *The Bubble* is the latest) literally take him from India to Bloomsbury.

Anand's project in *Untouchable* is no less than the extension of full human status

to the lowest rung in the caste hierarchy of orthodox Hindu India, the untouchable caste. As such, his dual target is the sensibility of upper-caste Indians, and of readers outside India. Anand was not alone in the 1930s in his protests against the injustices and atrocities visited upon the Untouchables. Many Indians, including Brahmins, urged reforms of Hindu cultural practices but Anand was the first to do so in English and for an English literary audience. I use the phrase "extension of full human status" advisedly since Anand saw his writing as an intervention.[2]

In the early 1930s, Indian nationalism made use of current thinking both inside and outside India. Both Rabindranath Tagore and Ernst Renan saw nationalism as a temporary necessity a stage toward an internationalist brotherhood. Contrasting the Turkish policy of equating nationality and religion with France's policy of sectarian citizenry, Renan finds value in France's selective erasure of the past:

> Yet the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things. No French citizen knows whether he is a Burgundian, an Alan, a Taifale, or a Visigoth, yet every French citizen has to have forgotten the massacre of Saint Bartholomew [1572] – thousands of Huguenots were killed] or the massacres that took place in the Midi in the thirteenth century. (Renan ii)

Renan's use of forgetfulness may be seen as a plea rather than a description of what actually happens; nations may officially 'forget', but the continued existence of local loyalties suggests a tribal memory that never truly relinquishes its sense of itself. The crucial feature for Renan is the emphasis on the individual turned citizen. The convenient fiction of the citizen as the ideal inhabitant of the nation allows all who are granted citizenship equality. However, it is when France extends its geographical boundaries (a military and colonial extension that Renan lived through) to cover territories whose inhabitants are visibly different and extends to them membership in the state of France that the plea of a unifying forgetfulness meets its limit. The French-speaking Algerian, for example, who has now become a French citizen, and who fully expects the same rights and responsibilities as any French citizen, is not allowed to forget his/her ancestry by virtue of his/her visible difference; similarly, the untouchable in India is not allowed to forget his/her ancestry by virtue of cultural signifiers.

Colonization and nationalism have a cause and effect relationship in the histories of all postcolonial cultures, but that does not necessarily imply that only nationalists struggle for a new society, nor should it imply that all pre-independence struggle is against colonialism. Nationalism is one liberatory discourse among others. For example, Indians in the first half

of the twentieth century turned to reformist and revivalist movements through the Brahmo Samajists and the Arya Samajists as well as to a western-oriented nationalist movement; francophone Africans turned to the negritude of Senghor and Cesaire in addition to modernism.

One of Mulk Raj Anand's daunting tasks in *Untouchable* is to show a character who suffers unjustly under discrimination sanctioned by his native culture. The difficulty arises with indicting one aspect of a culture without arraigning it entire; especially so with caste, which is imbricated in virtually every aspect of Hindu culture.

> The caste Hindu [has a heritage] which refuses to accept the fact that the untouchable is a human being, but insists on treating him like a subhuman creature, to be ignored or bullied or exploited as occasion demands. (*Untouchable* 29)

In choosing a boy of the untouchable *chamar* (sweeper) caste as his subject, Anand becomes the first author to consider such "unworthy" lives appropriate literary matter; indeed, *Untouchable* has been praised as much for its subject matter as for its aesthetic merits. Anand participates in the nationalist project of unifying the country by bringing forth an awareness of the injustices faced by a large segment of the population. Upper-caste Hindus certainly were aware of the sub-human status accorded to the Untouchables, and many worked diligently for reform, but until Anand's novel the lives of Untouchables did not exist in literature written in English. The story follows the young sweeper boy, Bakha, as he deals with the frustrations of an ordinary day in his life. Over the course of the day Bakha cleans toilets, plays field hockey, sweeps the streets of the town, and on this particular day defends his sister's honour against a hypocritical priest, attends the wedding of a childhood friend, and listens to Gandhi at a public rally. Each simple event reinforces Bakha's low place as an untouchable with its social and moral inequities.

In Bakha's consciousness the nation and nationalism are irrelevant. Surprisingly, it is the "oppressors," the ferungis (foreigners), who first look beyond Bakha's position and see *him*. The representation of Gandhi in the novel carries a nationalist resonance for some of the characters and for all the book's contemporary readers, but for Bakha it carries only the hope of alleviating the misery caused by other Indians. The binary depiction of colonizer/colonized relations in other postcolonial works, written at roughly the same time such as Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, among others, is partly due to the focus on the arrival of nationalist anti-colonizer sentiments to a little village. In Anand's *Untouchable*, however, the colonizer is a benign military presence.

As Cowasjee points out, Anand's

> hatred of imperialism [does] not blind him to some of the disgusting facets of Indian life: the cruelty and hypocrisy of feudalism; the web of castes, creeds, dead habits and customs which enslave nine-tenths of the Indian people. (23)

Anand faults, in his post-independence fiction, the citizen model of nationhood adopted by newly independent India; although India adopts universal adult suffrage, many of the illiterate poor are citizens in name only. The continued atrocities faced by the Untouchables in India can be located at the distinction between community and state. The state as a legal, abstract entity extends full membership to everyone, but the community follows its own cultural logic.[3] However, in 1935 (the publication date of *Untouchable*) India is not a sovereign country as yet, and thus in no position to grant anyone anything.

Anand's decision to portray Bakha and his sister as sexual innocents rather than as asexual saints, a stance which was popularized by Gandhi as well as by a religious tradition that reveres ascetics, may have to do with his attempt to develop a biological identity between Untouchables and the twice-born castes. Bakha and Sohini are seen as beautiful physical specimens, whereas, the Brahmins are seen as physically and morally degenerate. Bakha is almost primal in his supple form; he stands out amongst the other Untouchables. Anand establishes a correspondence between morality and body: the good are strong and beautiful; the bad are weak and ugly, which means the good are born not made. They can be found in any caste.

Sohini, Bakha's sister, is an innocent and therefore in Anand's view also beautiful. Like Bakha, she too does not seem fit to be an Untouchable. Anand describes her in terms of an *apsara*: "full-bodied within the limits of her graceful frame, well rounded on the hips. With an arched narrow waist ... above which were her full, round, globular breasts ..." (22). Bakhtin's classical body is Greco-Roman; this is an Indian classical body. The description of her body might seem exotic and slightly pornographic for an English reader but she is given the features of a classic Indian beauty. Sohini's form is that of idealised temple dancers and semi-divine beings.

> Her figure could have vied with the sculptured images of Konark and Khajuraho, but she has been condemned by birth to walk the path of the outcastes and to suffer their mortification. (Cowasjee 29)

In the critical frame I'm arguing against, Bakha and Sohini's classical beauty would be seen as a postcolonial counter to the sexualized objectification of the native by Orientalist discourse, but there is more to the matter than that. Bakha and Sohini's beautiful bodies counter a Brahminical conception of the grotesque untouchable body within the novel, and unfortunately outside the novel as well. The point with *Untouchable*, the novel, is that the

grotesque native body is the conception the orthodox native Brahmin has of a fellow native, and *not* the colonizer's conception. If anything, Bakha's beautiful body is rendered by Anand in terms similar to the punkha-wallah in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India.*

As Anand has pointed out in various essays, he sees British ideas including nationalism as necessary catalysts for Hindu cultural reform. His successful characters manage to meld the best of modernity and tradition. Indian nationalism pursues a unity of identity in its pre-independence and early independence aspects, but in its post-independence aspect it seeks a unity of pluralities. In a speech in Innsbruck in 1974, Anand stated that "the first...assertion of Nationalism was not mainly political. It was cultural, in so far as it manifested itself in the search for personal identity" (Fisher 159). That may be, but the Japanese defeat of Russia in 1905 so spurred the militant activities of revivalist and reformist terrorists that "for the first time since 1857 [the year of the Indian Mutiny or Rebellion] the [British] government [of India] was faced with political assassinations and acts of sabotage" (Embree 47). The struggles of all manner of revolutionaries, and perhaps especially, the leadership of Gandhi, in conjunction with a seriously weakened post-war Britain brought about Indian Independence in 1947.

The nationalism which had fostered, and even demanded, a national identity through a greater identification with the pan-ethnic nation rather than the region, now finds itself in the difficult position of having to honour a dream: the dream of personal fulfilment, the coming of *Ramaraj* (a new golden age) with *Swaraj* (self-rule). The challenge India has had to face with increasing frequency and urgency is that of maintaining a sovereign nation while simultaneously recognizing the differences among the distinct linguistic and religious ethnicities within it.

> It appeared, in fact, during 1982-84 that the old problem of Indian unity was approaching a new period of crisis concerning those old and new unresolved problems. The flash-points were, of course, Assam and Punjab primarily, but there were indications of problems to come in Kashmir as well. (Brass 169)

Anand's semi-autobiographical novel *The Bubble*, though written in the late 1970s and published in 1984, is set in the same time period as *Untouchable*, i.e., a post-independence novel set in pre-independence times. *Untouchable* springs from the material unearthed in the growth of the hero of *The Bubble*, Krishan Chander Azad, Anand's alter ego. In his other post-independence novels Anand has pointed to the failure of the citizen-state of India to ensure a fair and equal status for all its citizens, that is, to treat all of its inhabitants as citizens. In *The Bubble*, Anand re-examines nationalist discourse in colonial times and shows the less than cohesive state of nationalist ideology.

The events that constitute the matter of the novel follow the pattern of the traditional *Bildungsroman* as a twenty-year old Krishan comes (runs away) to London in order to pursue his doctorate in philosophy. The novel chronicles the two years Krishan spends in London, Wales, Paris, and Dublin, as he learns that he wants to pursue the life of a writer, falls in love with Irene (an Irish revolutionary), strengthens his conviction that humanism is the best way to live in the world, and yokes his desire for Indian independence with making the voices of the Indian masses heard.

Krishan protests against the middle-class sexual mores that have been drummed into him by his Arya Samajist uncles, and by Gandhi's writings and speeches which are summarized in the dictum that every Hindu youth should repress all sexual urges until his arranged marriage. Such a repression of the body produces, Krishan feels, perversions such as: "homosexuality, rape of Untouchable girls, masturbation, prostitution..." (*The Bubble* 220). Krishan reaches the conclusion that Indian society has sublimated sexuality into religion and morality, and that he will rescue his body from such a state.

Because *The Bubble* takes part in the long romantic history of representing the body as a term of opposition (the seat of desire, irrationality, transgression) to reason, order, and the capitalist way, and thus shares both postmodern and postcolonial concerns, the eurocentric critic might be tempted to apply only a postmodern frame to the next. One of the main uses postmodernism makes of the body is as a counter in the contest between desire and reason:

> The critique of reason as emancipation has resulted in an interest in the body, both as a source of opposition to instrumental reason and as the target of the colonization of the everyday world by the public arena of (male) reason. (Turner 8)

Such a use of the body is also an aspect of postcolonial critique, especially when combined with the notion of centre and margin. Barker's examination of the split between a self-possessed subject and that subject's body makes use of the colonial version of the centre-margin metaphor to illustrate the potentially subversive aspect of the erased body. According to Barker, the modern subject's body

> ...lingers just beyond the limits of discourse, in so far as the subject's speech is present to itself. It hovers outside the charmed circle of subjective self-possession, and from that boundary position continues to agitate the order within the perimeter... The discourse... arranged around as well as against the body, must therefore police the interior as well as the frontiers against its restless energy, its lack. (Barker 65)

The body, then, can oppose reason through desire, which in the colonialist thematic is as often identified with a culturally alien other as it is with males, and it can subvert attempts a subject may make to erase troubling reminders of a self outside the control of that subject. The body in *post* colonialism troubles not only subjective self-possession but also, significantly and politically, troubles objective possession of the self. As the colonized subject's self-image is contested by various "native" discourses and by the discourses of the colonizer, so too is the body. It would seem that under the rule of the colonizer, the body of the colonized has to either subject itself to a rebellious rule (albeit one still within the colonial thematic) or be subject to an alien discourse.

The rebellion that the young Krishan undertakes against the Gandhian dictates of being sexless is against someone who historically sought to negate the received colonialist image of the Indian, especially the 'non-martial' Hindu, as a degenerate sensualist. The perception of the young Krishan that Gandhi's sexuality is responsible for hypocritical repression is much more plausible in situating a character in that colonial milieu from the distance of a post-independence India. The colonial thematic requires that the native male subject see himself as either a weak sensualist or that he rebel by asserting an exaggerated aggressiveness.[4] Gandhi refuses to entertain such a thematic. Anand has Bakha, in the pre-independence *Untouchable*, adopt the eccentric (outside the colonial thematic) asexual stance that Gandhi proposes. Krishan, in the pre-independence *The Bubble*, seeks (with the assistance of a mature Anand who has lived through his country's struggle for independence and the significant failures, amid some spectacular successes, of the central vision that catalyzed that struggle) a sexuality that is as eccentric as Gandhi's asexuality but not as hypocritically repressive of the body.

Krishan's attempts to forge a new sexuality find their focus in Irene who starts out as a revolutionary-sensualist. Krishan tries to reconcile his feelings of jealousy of Irene's sexually free ways by understanding them as her "revolt against possession by any one person" (193), but Irene later tells him that she had treated her body as a separate material thing from her sense of herself. Irene's sexual deviance might be seen as her physical and psychological revolt against the colonial power of England, and in repudiating her particular form of transgression she seeks to make herself whole and unified. In a post-independence postcolonial text set in a pre-independence configuration of colonizer and colonized, Anand brings together both classical and grotesque bodies as symbols of transgression.

Irene's characterization of her earlier behaviour as sick, as the effect of an incoherent self-image ("But there was me and my body. The 'me' remained untouched. I felt contempt for my body when he had me") can be read as the revolutionary turning reactionary, but that would do an injustice to the attempts Irene and Krishan make at combining passion and love.

Krishan goes to prostitutes twice to make Irene feel as jealous of him as he is of her when she has sex with others, and fails both times to use them as a "degenerate sensualist" would. The first time, he runs away while the prostitute is in the bathroom getting ready. The second time, as a different prostitute washes his penis, Krishan is "fascinated by the ritualistic ablutions of [his] private parts, by which she was trying to end the distance between [his] body and hers, as her hard fingers became softer and caressed [his] penis playfully" (353).

The combination of ritual and sex, the prostitute's hardness becoming soft, the merging of their two bodies through her hand and his penis, all come together in boundary violations between religion and sex and bodies. Anand's focus on the lower material stratum (as Bakhtin would have it), the critique of religion through sex, and Irene's psychological fragmentation of her body, render the grotesque body a symbol of transgression against the colonizer and against the cultural response to the colonizer's construction of the self.

Transgression is used most often in terms of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School which sees in it a negation of instrumental reason. By disturbing the boundaries of official discourse, transgression opens the field of cultural discourse to the possibility of alternatives. The official discourse I'd like to open is that of nationalist-driven postcolonial discourse in which nationalism is the counter to the colonizer and the source of post-independence oppressions.

Currently, two opposing models of nation development, stage and hegemonic, are applied to "developing" or "Third World" nations. The stage model takes for granted that the nation is an expression of the people. It sees the nation-state as part of a master-narrative in which the West has a lead on the East in the linear development of that Western complex of capitalism and modernity known as the modern nation.[5] In this model the "Third World" will eventually become indistinguishable from the "First World." The hegemonic model sees the newly-independent nation as the rise to prominence of one class, the bourgeoisie, in a contest among classes. It sees the pursuit of nationhood by formerly colonized countries as a mistake for nationalism is a European idea and thus predicated on the existence of colonies. The developing nations cannot ever become like the European nations they seek to emulate because they have not grown organically into nationhood. They do not have the same power structure with lesser nations (colonies) that the European nations had with them; hence, these former colonies cannot have the same resources and the stability of the European nations.[6] Both stage and hegemonic models see contemporary nations as emulating the West, but in the former, the emulation is a laudatory and pre-ordained enterprise; whereas, in the latter, the emulation is the source of the mis-match, and consequent violence, between nativist visions and neo-colonialist bourgeois capitalist capitulations.[7] Although both stage and hegemonic models are deterministic, the latter has the virtue of keeping the fates in

abeyance until after the newly independent nation-state has made the choice of following the path of Western nationalism. In the hegemonic model it is possible to see nationalism in pre-independence colonies as one liberatory discourse among others.

Bakhtin's notion of the novel as a field of contesting discourses provides an analogy for the nation-state. The novel is irrevocably plural, as is the nation-state, but particular discourses try to govern that plurality, to offer a single invariant reading. Regarding the nation-state as a field of contesting discourses allows other liberatory discourses to emerge from the shadow of nationalism, i.e., nationalism need not be seen as an uneasy amalgam of any and all formulations of dissent or even consent in a particular society. Thus some liberatory discourses call for a close identification with western models of modernism while others call for a return to tradition, and yet others seek a reformation. Contrary to the both Nationalist and anti-Nationalist historians and cultural critics, nationalism becomes one of the possible paths for a colonized people to Independence, and not necessarily a coercive one. In viewing nationalism as the discourse that emerged from the struggles for Independence as the new government, it becomes possible to recast the widening fractures in post-independence postcolonial societies as the continued struggle of liberatory discourses rather than only as a failure of nationalism to fulfil its utopian promises. The promises of a failed nationalism are no different than the promises of many of the other liberatory discourses.

The grotesque body in Kane's understanding, above, does protest against the failure of the promised nationalist utopia, but by regarding nationalism as the only discourse in postcolonial fiction she reduces important alternate visions within the cultural spaces of India into mere signs of discontent. Removing nationalism as the foundational term of colonial resistance to imperial schemes makes visible other structures of control which in turn brings into play other transgressions. The body can now be used as a symbol of transgression against not only a foreign imposition but against any repressive order. The particular formation of the body in a transgressive act can now be either grotesque or classically beautiful depending on the historical specificity of the controlling discourse.

Notes

[1] The evangelical fervour of the "pilgrimages" has led some critics to charge Anand with creating superficial characters whose primary purpose is to serve as carriers of the author's ideologies. Arun Mukherjee, R.K. Kaushik, and S.C. Harrex are among those who, while admiring Anand's work in general, fault him for speaking for others or for focusing on the sociology of his characters at the expense of their psychology.

[2] Arun Mukherjee notes that Anand speaks on behalf of the Untouchables in *Untouchable* to an English audience, and she roundly criticizes Anand for romanticizing the Untouchables in the process.

[3] Partha Chatterjee goes further in asserting that the problems facing post-independent India are, in large part, the result of adopting Nationalism which he sees as a Western creation and thus unsuited for an Eastern country.

[4] I am increasingly uncomfortable in using a historical designation, colonialism, derived from the political

practices of the day to describe a complex of behaviours and beliefs that occurs in many other contexts. My unease rises from the inaccuracy of the label since the conceptual and practical behaviours it names occur elsewhere and at other times not at all colonial. The fundamentalist political parties in India, since at least the middle 1980s, have had recourse to the same paradigm as the pre-independence nationalists of the sexually degenerate Indian as the cause of the country's problems. The difference is that the pre-independence nationalists called for sexual self-control; whereas, the fundamentalists urge Indian males, Hindus or Muslims depending on the particular community doing the fomenting, to not be emasculated effeminate eunuchs, to prove their manhood by aggressively assaulting, often killing, the other.

See David C. Gordon's *Self-Determination* for a study based on this model.

The hegemonic model ignores studies of European nations which show that they too are made up of disparate components, and that their apparent stability comes from the consolidation of the interests of various power groups and the great amounts of time and energy spent in shoring their dominant fictions of themselves.

An exemplary study of the hegemonic model is Partha Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought*. Although I do not pursue the differential understanding of nationalism in India between Muslims and Hindus, the carnage of the partition riots that marked the separation of the sub-continent into two states underscores the ethnic basis of Indian nationalism. See M.R.T's *Nationalism in Conflict in India*, Delhi: Muslim League Printing Press, 1942, for a defence of the two-nation theory.

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Professor of English
Emerson College
U.S.A

The Lawrentian Vision of Martin Amis' *London Fields*

KENNETH ASHER

In the introduction to his collection of short stories *Einstein's Monsters*, Martin Amis recounts first with bitterness, then with resignation, the failure of his father and other writers of the previous generation to respond fully to the impending threat of nuclear warfare :

> ...[T]he senior generation of writers has remained silent; prolific and major though many of them are, with writing lives that straddled the evolutionary firebreak of 1945, they evidently did not find that the subject suggested itself naturally. They lived in one kind of world, then they lived in another kind of world; and they did not tell us what the difference was like (23).

At some level Amis seems to know, though he does not quite admit, that it may be asking too much of those who emerged from the palpable horrors of a hot war to find their lives substantially worse in the grip of a cold one, even with the looming specter of nuclear winter. Further, if Frank Kermode was right in *The Sense of an Ending* in identifying the apocalyptic mood as the distinguishing feature of modernism, perhaps it is natural enough that the older generation, weaned on eschatology, would tend to see Amis' world and his reaction to it as a continuity, not a rupture (See ch. 4). Over time even the abyss can become familiar landscape.

But whether or not Amis is right in seeing an abdication of responsibility, the fact remains that he clearly believes the inheritance from his immediate elders to be virtually useless in a transfigured world. Finding himself thus morally disenfranchised, Amis, it appears, looks back a generation for guidance to the paleo-modernists, those who were first forced to superimpose on the Arcadia of pastoral Britain the horrific image of Verdun. And of these none reacted with greater outrage than D. H. Lawrence, who saw in the mesmerized metallic hordes marching to their deaths the final ghastly playing out of the same mechanized will that pockmarked his native Nottinghamshire with coal mines and blighted his family life. Alone of the great modernists, Lawrence systematically conflated the mutilation of bodies and souls with the mutilation of the earth. The war-crippled, impotent, and emotionally retarded Clifford Chatterley operating coal mines from his electric wheel chair served as the most obvious symbol.

What distinguishes Lawrence's lament from that of the other early modernists is

that his cultural despair so quickly and completely can be absorbed in biological imperatives. In *Women in Love*, written during the war, Lawrence's mouthpiece, Rupert Birkin, wonders if human beings aren't simply one of nature's failed experiments and envisions a clean new world without them:

> If only man was swept off the face of the earth, creation would go on so marvelously, with a new start, non-human. Man is one of the mistakes of creation—like the ichthyosauri.– If only he were gone again, think what lovely things would come out of the liberated days; — things straight out of the fire (188).

This is an imagining radically different from Yeats' "Second Coming" or Eliot's instauration of the Christian commonwealth; this is a new age in which *extinction* is the price of moral failure. Nature judges culture.

Although Ursula rightly points out to Birkin that the optimism in the above quoted passage rings hallow—born more of frustration that joy—the very fact that Birkin can make such a statement and have it taken seriously says a great deal about the dense organicism of Lawrence's view. Beneath the surface, Lawrence's universe is held together by an interlocking system of energy fields. In interpersonal relationships this shows up in the irresistible attraction and repulsion of his characters to one another, typically couched in terms of magnetic force or electrical circuitry. This conception of cathexis and anti-cathexis, conceived in competition with Freud's model of psychic energies, likewise strains beyond metaphor in the direction of scientific somatic grounding:

> We can quite tangibly deal with the human unconscious. We trace its source and centers in the great ganglia and nodes of the nervous system. We establish the nature of the spontaneous consiousness at each of these centers; we determine the polarity and the direction of the polarized flow (*Psychoanalysis* 43).

The admixture of silliness here ought not to detract from the seriousness behind Lawrence's insistence on an all-implicating web of impersonal forces—a "hard" version of Romanticism, owing more to Nietzsche than to Wordsworth. This claim in turn gives rise to even more fanciful flights as Lawrence works out from the individual to the cosmos in *Fantasis of the Unconscious*:

> How it is contrived that the individual soul in the living sways the very sun in its centrality, I do not know. But it is so. It is the peculiar dynamic polarity of the living soul in every weed or bug or beast, each one

> separately and individually polarized with the great returning pole of the sun, that maintains the sun alive. For I take it that the sun is the great sympathetic center of our inanimate universe. I take it that the sun breathes in the effluence of all that fades and dies. Across space fly the innumerable vibrations which are the basis of all matter (183).

Once again, it would be a mistake to let what here looks like a poor pun on the term solar plexus diminish the importance of what Lawrence is reaching for. This sort of home-spun myth, of the kind that Eliot derided as non-Conformist rambling, is absolutely central to Lawrence's vision.

What Lawrence is struggling to establish with this talk of polarity is a post-Helmholzian version of the Great Chain of Being, with the sun in the position formerly occupied by God, positive and negative energy replacing the flow of love and wrath. But Lawrence insists that reverence be maintained. One of the last works he wrote, *Apocalypse*, was dedicated to initiating the trivial modern sun-bather into the mysteries of the pre-Christian sun-worshipper. Science legitimizes the system but must remain subordinate to a sense of religious awe before the whole.

A further similarity to the earlier version of the chain of being is that human beings, despite their relatively inferior status and transitory doings, can send shock waves throughout the system. Just as assassination in Shakespeare could derange the heavens, so too in Lawrence the motions of individual souls can disrupt cosmos. Lawrence finds the dynamics of the age played out in the sado-masochistic give and take of Gerald Crich and Gudrun Brangwen in *Women in Love*, the same deathly perversion of the will that the Chilchui Indians in the short story "The Women Who Rode Away" believe has enervated the sun. Indeed, in the haunting climax to that story, the heroine is about to be sacrificed to realign the balance between sun and moon and usher in a new era. Rarely, even in the Puritanical tradition out of which Lawrence comes, has the activity of ordinary individuals been freighted with such significance.

But it is precisely this sort of highly articulated moral universe that Amis' characters inhabit in his major work to date *London Fields*. The title itself gathers up most of Lawrence's essential themes. Among other things, it refers to the fields of rural England (2), force fields of "electromagnetic attraction and repulsion" among Londoners (134), the killing fields of Cambodia (142), fields of radiation emitted by nuclear weapon research (161), and the bygone fields of London itself where the dying narrator recalls boyhood games with his brother (463). This dry catalogue does not do complete justice to Amis' conception, however, for the title is not merely intended as a witty allusion to various aspects of the novel, but rather as something that is omnipresent and emerges from the text itself. Amis indicates the

deeply organic nature of his project in a prefatory note where he explains the process of choosing a title. After mentioning the possibilities that had occurred to him, he continues:

> There are two kinds of titles—two grades, two orders. The first kind of title decides on a name for something that is already there. The second kind of title is present all along: it lives and breathes, or it tries, on every page. My [earlier] suggestions (and they cost me sleep) are all of the first kind of title. *London fields* is the second kind of title. So let's call it *London Fields*. This book is called *London Fields*. *London Fields*...

As with Lawrence what holds the whole together is the incessant flow of energy, but now as we approach millennium accelerated, so that everything in Amis' universe seems to be on an imminent collision course: the male characters propelled toward Nicola, Nicola toward her fate, asteroids toward the earth, whole planets toward implosion in energy-sucking black holes. The highly charged, forward-surging prose style in which each sentence seems to compel the next—refusing, grumbled Amis *pere*, to provide any filler as an oasis of reflection—heightens the effect.

Amis' urgency is spurred by the sense that Lawrence's means of salvation for the twentieth century is a dwindling possibility. In conversation with Gerald on the value of life, Birkin had explained that for him "there remains only this perfect union with a woman—sort of ultimate marriage—and there isn't anything else...seeing there's no God" (*Women* 110). But as Amis' narrator, going one step further, wonders, 'What if love itself should disappear?' : "Perhaps love *was* dying, was already dead. One more catastrophe. The death of God was possibly survivable in the end. But if love was going the same way, if love was going out with God...(132)." And with a sudden importation of cosmic perspective reminiscent of fluid Renaissance shifts up and down the chain of being, Amis takes us up short by reminding that earth is love's only habitat in the universe (196).

With the stakes this high, the narrator attempts "a love story (I think), of all strange things, so late in the century, so late in the goddamned day (1)." The novel itself is the record of the ensuing struggle to craft the story between this ironically named champion of love Samson Young and his polar opposite Nicola Six, who makes a career of negating love and sending it back as its twin opposites hate and death. In this respect she is modeled on Lawrence's Gudrun, but Gudrun whose powers and cynicism have been exponentially increased. Whereas a Gudrun was alluring, Nicola is virtually irresistible. Whereas Gudrun had still remaining the experience of the illusionless last man, the "wizard rat" Loerke, Nicola "had really *got to the end* of men (126)." Neither believe in love, but Nicola wants to destroy love, to take it with her when she goes. She has a steady intuition that love will be present at her death and the climax of *her* story requires love to deny its own nature by killing her in a spasm of hatred and thereby annihilate itself.

As with Gudrun and, in fact, all Lawrence's unhealthy characters, Nicola's irremediable psychic distortion manifests itself in the imbalance of sado-masochism. She makes a career of torturing men while actively soliciting her own murder. All her many liaisons end in violence, differing only in whether she is dispensing or receiving physical abuse. In regard to this ultimately self-destructive cycle of violence she represents the evil genius of the atomic age : "Right from the start she had a friend—Enola, Enola Gay. Enola wasn't real. Enola came from inside the head of Nicola Six (16)." Indeed for most of the novel it appears that Nicola might well take the whole city with her as she moves toward her death on Guy Fawkes Day—London, it turns out, is a prime nuclear target in the ever worsening "Crisis". Having denied the future with seven abortions, Nicola claims Enola as her only creation.

In this vein, Amis takes full advantage of the cartoonish license of postmodern fiction to create prodigies of evil. Keith Talent, for example, has a character so thoroughly debased, a mind so "reptilian" that the human element seems all but extinguished. And Amis makes a point of reminding us that despite the black comedy of Keith's sordid doings "there *were* worse guys." Sure to be one of them, the child Marmaduke, in his impossibly sleepless dedication to mayhem, threatens to transcend even the conventions of postmodernism. (Amis slyly has his narrator confess "I keep trying to tone Marmaduke *down* [158]," while only making things worse by offering the defense that this is already a bowdlerized version.) A serial nanny-maimer, Marmaduke spends interludes between victims in beating his head against the nursery wall and gorging himself until he throws it all up—a parody of Nicola's sado-masochism. Here is her true spiritual progeny, the human embodiment of Enola Gay's "Little Boy," who together ring a gruesome pun on the much vaunted *nuclear* family of the 80's. (Guy holds his son at arm's length "like a bag of plutonium"). This delight in excess is invariably funny, sometimes hysterically so—and this is the temperamental difference that sorts Amis out sharply from the notoriously humorless Lawrence who can manage only grim irony—but Amis' intention is every bit as serious as Lawrence's. In the introduction to *Einstein's Monsters* he underscores the surreal quality of life in the nuclear age in a passage that might serve, too, as artistic manifesto:

> I believe that many of the deformations and perversities of the modern setting are related to—and are certainly dwarfed by—this massive preemption. Our moral contracts are inevitably weakened, and in unpredictable ways. After all, what *acte gratuite*, what vulgar outrage or moronic barbarity can compare with the black dream of nuclear exchange (7-8) ?

Seen against this backdrop, the comedic disorientation and seemingly boundless excess, far from manic self-indulgence, effectively register moral dislocation much in the manner of the hallucinated realism of Dickens. This attempt to portray a present already

gathered up and transfigured by an imminent future is the distinguishing feature of apocalyptic fiction as Kermode identifies it and owes an obvious debt to Christian eschatology (24-8). The narrative of our life, at its most meaningful, is written backwards—an idea Amis explores more radically in *Time's Arrow*.

Amis' virtuoso performance in this regard is not without its potential dangers, however, for it is not always easy to be certain what sort of accountability we should grant his characters. The difficulty in getting clear about Nicola and her gruesome end is the prime example. Throughout the novel we are beckoned into the fulness of her private life in bedroom and bathroom, all of which lends a solidity to her character. We dutifully watch her wash dishes and trek to the tobacconist to buy her favorite cigarettes. Yet there is also the Nicola of superhuman clairvoyance and soulless manipulativeness who threatens to take on the allegorical proportions of, say, Spenser's Duessa, a demonic principal assuming human shape, a seductive hologram. This diabolical aspect in Nicola is furthered by the association of her name with Old Nick; her Mephistophelian pact with Keith (he alone uses shortened forms of her name as if at least partial recognition is a condition of the contract); and her address at 666, an extension of her last name. The difficulty in sorting out Nicola the character from Nicola the allegory is brought to a head when we are forced to make sense of the novel's single most disturbing scene in which the narrator clubs a fully willing Nicola to death with a tire iron—and Amis clearly means for us to accept the act as necessary.

If we insist on preserving Nicola's status as a character, Amis has, in mitigation, shown us her horribly destructive career, including in great detail her unforgivable abuse of the idealistic Guy. Further, by allusion to the suicide of Hardy's similar darkly exotic and frustrated beauty, Eustacia Wye—both die on bonfire night—Amis means for us to acknowledge death as preferable to a loveless future. But none of this gets at the intense call between murderer and murderee, a connection that relies on the dark logic of Lawrentian dynamics. In *Women in Love*, during a wedding reception, Birkin's defense of the bride's healthy spontaneity that had led her to disregard convention annoys Gerald, quickly leading to the following escalation:

> "And I," said Gerald grimly, "shouldn't like to be in a world of people who acted individually and spontaneously, as you call it. We should have everybody cutting everybody else's throat in five minutes."
>
> "That means you would like to be cutting everybody's throat," said Birkin.
>
> "How does that follow?" asked Gerald crossly.
>
> "No man," said Birkin, "cuts another man's throat unless he wants to cut it,

> and unless the other man wants it cutting. This is a complete truth. It takes two people to make a murder: a murderer and a murderee. And a murderee is a man who is murderable. And a man who is murderable is a man who in a profound if hidden lust desires to be murdered (27)."

Consonant with Birkin's analysis, Nicola's desire to be murdered is made clear from the very beginning. (Acknowledging the centrality of this, Amis came close to calling the novel *The Murderee*, his considered best choice among the second kind of title.) On her first visit to the Black Cross pub, Nicola immediately feels the Lawrentian blood response of her muderer—before anyone has motive—and gradually pulls all three of the male possibilities present there into her orbit. Dominating Keith and Guy by denying sex, Samson by forcing it, she supplies each with the missing reason to kill her. But when Samson finally complies, what ethical sense are we to make of the act? It this a case of Amis following a desperate Lawrence into the morass of *The Plumed Serpent* with its sanctioning of murder for the sake of a New Time?

I think the answer to this must be no, but it is not an easy no. To his credit Amis refuses to fracture his novel by sublimating Nicola to pure allegory in the events leading up to the murder. In fact, shortly before the end he invokes sympathy for her—the only time in the work he does so. As she anticipates her death on the following day, Samson is genuinely moved:

> Nicola was looking out, at the window, at the world. Her slender throat tautened, and her eyes filled with indignation or simple self-belief. She had about her then the thing of hers that touched me most: as if she were surrounded, on every side, by tiny multitudes of clever enemies (436).

Further, Samson reacts after the murder with a sense of pollution: "Yesterday I dreamt I ate my teeth. *That's* what murder feels like. I failed in art and love. I wonder if there's time to wash all this blood off my hands" (467). Samson's haunted reaction, though, orients our reading of events. This burden of blood-guilt attending the murder of a creature of contagion, when coupled with the victim's own foreknowledge of doom and the inevitable march toward her fate, solicits a consideration of the novel in terms of Greek tragedy. Seen in this way, Nicola's death becomes a matter of cosmic readjustment, the order of things beings set right. Samson is not thereby absolved of the murder, but the act can be expiated, and this is clearly Amis' intent at the novel's end when Samson dedicates his failing energies to protecting the abused child Kim. Amis underlines the connection by having the final words of Samson's note to Kim —"So if you ever felt something behind you, when you weren't even one, like a welcome heat, like a bulb, like a sun, trying to shine right across the universe— it was me. Always me. It was me. It was me". (470)—echo Nicola's flare of recognition at the moment of murder: "You... always you" (465). At the most abstract level Nicola's elimination is a necessary condition for Kim's survival.

Samson's comparison of his love for Kim with the sun's warmth and light reaffirm at the last the positive loop of Lawrentian energies. Throughout most of the novel, however, this force has been diminishing as events have moved toward November 5th, Nicola's birthday and the scheduled total eclipse of the sun. She and the sun hasten simultaneously toward obliteration, or more accurately, Nicola seems to be dragging the sun with her. Samson first sees her against "the low sun" and at her final address "she had never been so far west before". Ominously, the sun is all the while threatened with a more permanent occlusion by the ever increasing likelihood of the nuclear war that has targeted London. Nicola's anti-energy is poised to replace the natural order: "Enola shone through Little Boy [the bomb dropped on Hiroshima] with the light of many suns" (66). Indeed, it seems like no match since those who recognize our responsibility in maintaining the sun— and for Amis this means the correspondent outflow of love — are bewildered or enervated. Guy, for example, gropingly tries to explain his intuition to his wife: "Please look. If I move my head, then the sun moves on the water. My eyes have as much say in it as the sun"(31),only to be met with dismissive sarcasm. Later he muses alone. "Why didn't more people worship the sun? The sun had so much going for it. It created life; it was profoundly mysterious; it was so powerful that no one on earth dared to look its way (148). "Samson, love's chief repository, lives in increasing pain, the radiation of Enola's other "suns" gnawing at his bones.

The proximate disappearance of the sun and the withering of love presages the imminent end of the planet. In a passage reminiscent of Lawrence's millenarian despair, Aims looks at our bleak prospects:

> We haven't been around for very long and we've turned the earth's hair white. She seemed to have eternal youth but now she's ageing awful fast, like an addict, like a waxless candle. *Jesus have you seen her recently?* We used to live and die without any sense of the planet getting older, of mother earth getting older, living and dying. We used to live outside history. But now we're coterminous. We're inside history now all right on its leading edge, with the wind ripping past our ears. Hard to love, when you're bracing for impact. And maybe love can't bear it either, and flees all planets when they reach this condition, when they get to the end of their twentieth centuries (197).

At this stage, human relationships fly apart, the pull of love reduced to almost zero gravity. Hope is unfaithful to Guy. Nicola endures relationships only long enough to make a diary entry. Keith keeps a string of girlfriends, merely one aspect of his career as a professional cheat. In fact, things have reached such a state that the cheats, grown so numerous, are reduced to cheating each other in an endless exchange of worthless goods. Worst of all, Kathy, abused by her husband Keith, in turn abuses her daughter Kim by

burning her with cigarettes. Harbingers of our end, the animals have already begun disappearing, and those that remain, like Keith's dog, are diseased and lethargic.

In light of this general entropy, an affirmative ending to the novel might seem to be implausible. Yet, as Amis reminds us : "Of all the forces, love is the strangest... Love can make a woman pick up a bus, or it can crush a man under the weight of a feather (324)." It can even enable the nearly extinguished Samson to act with the vigor necessary to kill Nicola and rescue Kim. Further, the extraordinary power of love is something those who don't experience it vastly underestimate. Nicola can imagine love only as a naïveté in regard to sexual urgings, and thus doesn't recognize it as a primordial force in itself or realize the range of its objects. When she manipulates Samson into sodomy with her—the last stage of decadence according to Lawrence—she believes that she has dispelled his illusion of love forever. From the beginning she has had the premonition that love would be present at her murder, but she has mistakenly taken this to mean the rage attendant on her demystification of love. What she never sees is that Samson's love—a love for Kim, for the planet, for the possibility of a future—is what is present at the end, and intact.

This faith in renewal based on the generosity of the individual—Dickens' ratification of the golden heart—places Amis squarely in the tradition of English moralists and again establishes his obvious kinship with Lawrence. As with Lawrence, except in his mercifully brief leadership phase, Amis' protagonists have little sense of class solidarity, join no movements, look to overthrow no regimes despite the mass insanity and sense of impending doom. If human community is to be reestablished, the bonds of connection, according to Amis, are much more likely to be the delicate filaments of private relationships. And these in turn are confirmed, as they are in Lawrence, by touch : Guy's hand on that of Keith's humiliated lover Trish, Samson reaching down to pick up Kim. These are always the moments when, despite the articulateness of Amis' protagonists, words fail. It is the outstretched arm that can most easily cross class boundaries : at the end, the three characters allied by love—Guy, Samson, and Kim—are from the upper, middle, and lower class respectively.

This is not to say that Amis is naively unaware of the brutalities of the British class system. His earlier novel *Money* had followed the roller coaster ride of John Self through the slum and plutocracy of Thatcher's England. Along the way self remarks on the hopelessness of the working class young :

> Now they seep out of school—to what? To nothing, to fuck-all. The young (you can see it in their faces), the stegosaurus-rugged no-hopers, the parrot-crested blankies—they've come up with an appropriate response to this, which is : nothing. Which is nothing, which is fuck-all. The dole-queue starts at the exit to the playground (144).

London Fields shows us what becomes of these youth grown older—inmates of the squalid Black Cross pub during the day, petty and largely unsuccessful criminals by night. Yet all their bravado and posturing prove inadequate defenses against "an unshakeable conviction of worthlessness."

But just as Amis is unwilling to rely on class consciousness for a solution, he is unwilling to see class origins as fully exculpatory. Instead he follows Lawrence's tendency to cloak individuality in mystery. In *Women in Love*, for example, there is no biological or sociological explanation possible for Ursula's nature having originated in humble surroundings, of lusterless parents :

> How could he [Mr.Brangwen] be the parent of Ursula, when he was not created himself. He was not a parent. A slip of living flesh had been transmitted through him, but the spirit had not come from him. The spirit had not come from any ancestor, it had come out of the unknown. A child is a child of the mystery, or it is uncreated (333).

Likewise in *London Fields* there is no satisfactory explanation offered for Nicola's warped being, or in a case parallel to Ursula's, why Kim should be remarkable though born to the unspeakable Keith. The moral urgency of both Lawrence and Amis requires responsible, largely free-standing selves to whom they can appeal.

But whether the appeal will be heeded is far from certain, for despite the positive ending, the future is in no way assured. In fact, the odds once again looked stacked against it. Samson may have managed to give Kim a fighting chance at survival, but what will that chance amount to with Marmaduke as her contemporary? He embodies all the latent potential for evil Amis detects in the future ; one can only speculate with horror what he will be like with adult power. Amis presents us with an ominous glimpse : "Marmaduke himself would unquestionably favour First-Use. Marmaduke was a definite First-Use Artist. Fight like hell for three days and then blow up the world (220)". Wistfully imagining his book might be turned into a film, Samson can only imagine "a little robot ... or high-tech cartoon...or, because age and time has gone so far wrong now, why not a youthful dwarf (282)" filling the role of Marmaduke. The warping of time, its manic acceleration as we approach zero hour, has propelled Marmaduke from infancy to pseudo-adulthood, without his ever having experienced childhood. In perhaps the most striking image of the way in which our moral failure on a grand scale corrupts us daily on a small scale, we find Marmaduke having physically and emotionally supplanted Guy in Hope's bed. Paul Morel's Oedipal fantasies now, at the end of Freud's century, meet with no resistance.

With a Manichean neatness that so often attends apocalyptic thinking, Amis carefully counterposes Kim's virtues against Marmaduke's vices. Whereas Marmaduke sputters incoherent obscenities, Kim's first words, attended to closely, reveal the gift of

vision. Whereas Marmaduke reacts to paternal solicitude with violence, Kim yearns for affectionate bonds with a callous, neglectful father. The childrens' relationship with their respective mothers also stands in stark contrast : Marmaduke's mother is self-indulgent and in turn grotesquely indulges her son ; Kim's mother is abused and in turn abuses Kim. And finally, Marmaduke's upbringing is upholstered with Guy's millions ; Kim is raised in a flat the size of a shoe box. Yet at the end the two radically opposed children seem destined for encounter since Samson has gotten Guy to take responsibility for Kim's future. His last act of love has been to create the conditions necessary for a *Wahlverwandshaft* between spiritual father and daughter. As foster siblings, Marmaduke and Kim will represent the Janus-faced possibilities of the next generation.

What's left to save has diminished considerably, though, since Lawrence died in 1930. At the end of his last major work, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, we are left with Mellors and Connie huddled in a diminishing Wragby Wood like an endangered species. By the time Amis writes, this sort of natural habitat barely qualifies as nostalgic :

> I must go back to London fields—but of course I'll never do it now. So far away. The time, the time, it never *was* the time... If I shut my eyes I can see the innocuous sky, afloat above the park of milky green. The traintrack, the slope, the trees, the stream : I played there with my brother as a child. So long ago (463).

Guy and Kim will have to survive on London's mean streets, the pattern of which, seen from above, constitutes the grid of a nuclear dart board. There's no longer any place to hide. As Nicola approaches her end, she throws the book she had been reading *Women in Love* across the room, "because reading presupposed a future" (195). In an effort to save that future, Amis implies that we might do well to begin by picking up our Lawrence once again.

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Prof. of English, State University of New York
Geneseo, N.Y. 14454, 716-245-5273

The Peregrinations of Saint Mary of Magdalen

MARIE-FRANCE HILGAR

The recent American productions of the *Last Temptation of Christ* and of *Jesus Christ Superstar* have done nothing in this country to revive interest in Mary of Magdalen, sister of Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead, companion of the Virgin Mary, assisting Our Lord at the foot of the cross.

The veneration she has always received in France stems from the fact—some will say the legend—that Mary-Magdalen, with her sister Martha, and her brother, settled in Southern France where she preached the gospel with Maximin, first bishop of Aix-en-Provence, before retiring to a cave, now known as la Sainte-Baume, where for thirty-three years she prayed for the forgiveness of her earlier sinful life.

When she died, the bishop of Aix buried Mary-Magdalen in the town which now bears his name, Saint-Maximin, and from the fifth century on, her tomb brought many pilgrims to the region. On the site of the Merovingian Church was built, slowly, from the XIIIth to the XVIth centuries, the basilica of "Sainte-Madeleine" which still stands today and which houses, in its gallo-roman crypt, relics of the holy woman.

Another, and even more famous, basilica dedicated to Sainte-Madeleine is found in Vézelay, more centrally located. Benedictine monks claimed also to have in their possession relics of Saint Mary-Magdalen. In Vézelay, during Easter of 1146, Aliénor d'Aquitaine and Louis VII heard St. Bernard preach of behalf of the second crusade.

Reports of Mary-Magdalen's miracles multiplied, monuments were dedicated to her, painters and sculptors often used their art to represent her, either at the apogy of her beauty, or skinny and pitiful after years of fasting, but almost always with luxuriant hair flowing down to her knees. The iconography of Saint Mary-Magdalen could fill many volumes. Mary-Magdalen soon replaced the apostles and even Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a venerated saint, probably because of the number of possibilities for literary romanesque developments.

The first texts found in France are in fact written in Latin. The many plays representing the Resurrection included, of course, Mary-Magdalen. She is shown as the woman closest to Jesus Christ. One example we have is the Easter play of Tours, which

dates back to the 12th century[1]. The Gospel's account of the visit to the tomb by the Marys to discover that Jesus has arisen is expanded to include the recognition scene between Mary-Magdalen and the Christ, as found in the Gospel of Saint John. The scene treating the appearance of the risen Christ to Mary-Magdalen is lost from the manuscript but in the extant parts of the play, a further enlargement of her role is shown. She is privileged to explain to the male disciples the mystery of the Christ's Resurrection.

At the peak of the Magdalen cult, in the thirteenth century, the "life" of Saint Mary-Magdalen appeared in Jacobus' *Legenda Sanctorum*[2]. The author opens his story with the narration of her repentance, concentrates on her mission in Marseilles, where she converts the king and his wife, and the many miracles she performs there before and after her death. At the beginning Jacobus follows the Gospels. He tells of Mary-Magdalen going to the house of Simon the Leper to wash Jesus' feet, wipe them with her hair and anoint them with expensive ointment. Jesus reproaches Simon for his insult to the woman and forgives her "because she loved much."

Jacobus goes beyond St. Luke to point out the close bond of love between Mary-Magdalen and Jesus and he enumerates the many favors that Christ bestowed upon her. She is the first one to whom He appeared after His Resurrection and she is chosen by Him to be "apostle to the apostles". Fourteen years later Mary-Magdalen goes to Marseilles where the king and queen have been hoping to have a son. Mary-Magdalen prays and the queen is instantly pregnant. The king decides to go to Rome to question Peter. The queen insists on accompanying him. A storm almost wrecks the ship. The queen gives birth before term and dies and the baby is left to die of hunger while the king continues his journey to Rome. Peter takes him to Jerusalem to be instructed in the Roman Catholic faith. When the king returns he finds that the Magdelen has resurrected his wife and taken care of his son. The temples of Marseilles are destroyed and replaced by Catholic churches. Lazarus becomes bishop of Marseilles as Maximin goes to Aix. Mary-Magdalen spends thirty years at La Baume. When she dies her soul flies to heaven. She is buried with great pomp, but in the year 769 she appears in person to give permission to a monk to remove her bones from her tomb in Saint-Maximin and to take them to Vézelay.

Jacobus pictures the Magdalen as Christ's feminine counterpart. She has been taught, by Jesus Himself, the mysteries of healing the blind and restoring the dead to life. But it is never forgotten that she was at one time a prostitute and the medieval Magdalen will serve as a model for the many repentant courtesans who during later centuries will figure in plays, romances, novels and films.

The Tours Easter plays is the first one, it seems, which isolates the Magdalen to give her special attention. Jean Michel, in his fifteenth century *Mystère de la Passion*[3] represents the seductive woman, devoted to adorning herself to attract lovers. She is interested

in Jesus' physical appearance. She stands apart from the crowd, hoping she will attract the attention of the good-looking Preacher and that He will find her irresistible. At the end, however, it is Mary-Magdalen who finds Jesus' words irresistible. The suddenly converted young woman puts a handkerchief on her head, goes to Simon's house where she washes Jesus' feet with her tears and dries them with her hair. Simon is unhappy about the presence of the sinful woman, but Jesus forgives her past sins. The rest of the play follows Saint John's account of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jean-Michel's innovation consists in his having the Magdalen set out to bewitch Jesus. She clearly serves as an outlet for the medieval playwright's individual creative imagination who often enjoys concentrating on the seductive Magdalen and stressing the incongruity of her role as a temptress in a religious play.

Marjorie Malvern claims that "the mythical Magdalen falls into decline as religious reform rises" but that she " manages to survive through the ages to centre the stage of twentieth-century theatre."[4] However in 1954 when Jean Rousset[5] affirms that La Madeleine had been the great saint of the seventeenth century, he is only confirming what Raymond Toinet[6] and Henri Brémond[7] noticed before him. "Mary-Magdalen was the preferred heroine of the XVII[th] century," wrote the first one in his *Quelques recherches autour des poemes héroïques-épiques français* and Father Brémond in l'*Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France* talks about three generations of poets who were on their knees in front of Mary-Magdalen. He adds that she is everywhere: in odes, stanzas, sonnets, hymns, epic poems, sermons, devotional books, books of morality. Changes, transformations, metamorphosis, being favourite figures of baroque literature, it is not surprising that the one-time courtesan turned into an exemplary penitent should become the theme of predilection of the post-tridentine-counter-Reformation Church. The Jesuits were particularly preoccupied by their most urgent mission, that of bringing back souls to God and they found in the beautiful sinner, converted by the love of Jesus and retired from the world to adore the Lord, the best example to offer to the sinners of their time.

The proliferation of Magdalenian texts can be perceived in the list given in appendix. It is far from being exhaustive, many poems being found in books simply entitled *Oeuvres*,[8] as is the case for Siméon Guillaume de la Roque who in 1609 presents "la belle Dame orgueilleuse et mondaine" (text in appendix). With its many antitheses, the sonnet is a perfect example of baroque style transformations. The mirror is replaced by a (pious) book, the beautiful golden palace by a cave, her fine clothes by a robe made of rough material, her eyes turn into fountains, no more joyous conversations come from her lips, only "funebres discours". Painters and authors are haunted by the picture of Mary-Magdalen sitting in a cave, surrounded by a crucifix, a skull, a book and sometimes a basin containing the Christ's blood.

The Magdalen's popularity wanes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but Maurice Maeterlinck[9], in one of his last plays written early in the twentieth century, gives Mary-Magdalen all his attention, so much so that the Nazarene, as Jesus is consistently called, never appears on the stage. It is through the Magdalen that His presence is felt. Maeterlinck's Mary-Magdalen is beautiful, has long golden hair but she is harsh and haughty. She never enjoys a laugh with her companions. It is her internal struggle as her soul strives for knowledge that the author chose to dramatize.

Mary-Magdalen lives in a beautiful Roman villa. Two doors down is the home of Simon the Leper who has been healed by the Nazarene. The destiny of Jesus lies in the hands of Verus, a Roman soldier sent to help Pontius-Pilate keep the peace, the Magdalen's lover.

As soon as the Magdalen hears Jesus' voice, a voice of a peculiar and penetrating sweetness, she is spellbound. As she tries to resist the divine call, she throws herself in Verus' arms, sobs, swears she loves him, pushes him away. Verus is convinced that the Magdalen and the Nazarene have made love together. He feels it is his duty to protect her from the barbarous witchcraft and childish spells of the Nazarene and he soon becomes furious with jealousy. He places full responsibility, and it is Maeterlinck's originality, for saving the Nazarene's life on Marie Magdalen. If she gives herself to Verus, he will save Jesus. She throws herself at his feet and begs for both Jesus' life and her soul, but Verus announces to the crowd outside that the Magdalen has betrayed their God. While reports of Jesus' way to the Cross are heard through the open windows, the Magdalen stands against a column in the middle of the room, motionless, but giving Him, miraculously, the strength to endure His Passion while she undergoes her own "passion."

Maeterlinck is not the last francophone author who gave a Mary-Magdalen to the public. Louis Artus, a now forgotten writer, but who was quite successful in the first half of our century published in 1945 *La plus belle histoire d'amour du monde*[10] for which he used primarily the accounts recorded by the four Evangelists and the findings of his research conducted at the Bibliothèque de l'Alliance Israélite. His book, tells us, is neither a biography, nor an agiography, nor a "vie romancée", even less a novel. Using the rather thin documentation available, Artus suggests adventures of Sainte Mary-Magdalen which logically tie together episodes of her life which are found in the Gospels and which he quotes. He also used *Les Révélations de Catherine Emmerich* whose visions, he said, have never been found erroneous. Marcelle, a servant in Lazare's household wrote down the events which she witnessed. Her reports were available to the early Christians but disappeared in the third century. Catherine Emmerich tells of Lazare and his sisters being put in a boat without rudder, how a storm pushed them into Massilia (Marseilles) where they converted the people, and the decision of Mary-Magdalen to retire to the solitude of her cave. Louis

Artus does not take his story any further. The Catholic author manages to give a moving story, full of people and full of life, without taking any liberties with the Scriptures because he has too much respect for the Divine Person who was the sublime partner of his heroine, and because of the character of sacred intangibility of the only historical document which is available about Mary-Magdalen.

The definite story of Sainte-Marie Madeleine is not found in the profane—some would say the blasphemous—*Jesus Christ Superstar* or *Last Temptation of Christ*. It is yet to be written, as suggested by the question mark in the title *Sainte Mary-Magdalen: Quelle est donc cette femme*?[11], a book written by the Franciscan Damien Vorreux in 1963.

The controversy concerning the Magdalen continues.

Notes

[1]Tours Easter Play. In Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*- Vol. 1, 1933. Reprint, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

[2]Jacobus A. Voragine. *Legenda Aurea: Vulgo Historia Lombardica Dicta,ad Optimorum Librorum Fidem*. Ed. Th. Graesse. 1850 3rd ed. 1890. Reprint. Osnabruck: Otto Zeller, 1965.

[3]Jean Michel. *Le Mystère de la Passion*. Ed. Gustave Cohen. Paris, 1925.

[4]Majorie M. Malvern. *Venus in Sackcloth*. Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1975, p. 125.

[5]Jean Rousset. *La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France: Circé et le paon*. Paris, J. Corti, 1954.

[6]Raymond Toinet. *Quelques recherches autor des poèmes héroïques-épiques français du dix-septième siècle*. Tulle: Crausson, 1899-1907.

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[8]S.-G. La Roque. *Les Oeuvres*, Paris: Vve. Cl. de Monstr'oiel, 1609.

[9]Maurice Maeterlinck. *Mary-Magdalene*. Trans. Alexander Teixeira de Mattos. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1910.

[10]Louis Artus. *La plus belle histoire d'amour du monde*. Paris: Denoel. 1945.

[11]Damien Vorreux. *Mary-Magdalen: quelle est donc cette femme*? Paris:Editions Franciscaines, 1963.

University of Nevada,
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154

"Enfin la belle Dame orgueilleuse et mondaine
Changea pour son salut et d'amant et d'amours,

Ses beaux palais dorez aux sauvages séjours,
Sa faute au repentir, son repos à peine,
Son miroir en un livre, et ses yeux en fontaine,
'Ses folastres propos en funèbres discours,
Changeant mesme d'habits en regrettant ses jours
Jadis mal employez à chose errante et vaine.
Puis ayant en horreur sa vie et sa beauté,
Mesprise le plaisir, I'aise et la vanité,
Les attraits de ses yeux, I,or de sa tresse blonde.
O bienheureux exemple! Ô sujet glorieux!
Qui nous montre icy bas que pour ganger les Cieux
Il faut avant la mort abandonner le monde."

Guilume de la Roque. 1609

The Poetry of Re(z)sisters: First Nations Women and Stri Dalit Poetry: A comparision.

DR. M. DASAN

> *If we who are not white, [upper castes] and also women have not yet seen that here we live in a prison, that we are doing time [serving a prison sentence], then we are fools playing unenjoyable games with ourselves. I want go so far, however, as to say that we deserve what we get*
>
> (Himani Bannerji *doing time*)

History of colonization reveals innumerable instances of indigenous people being displaced and destroyed. They were coerced, abused and forced to serve the purpose of building the empire. They were bought and sold like chattels and suffered many indignities. The experiences of indigenous women were bitter than their men. These degraded "beasts of burden" continued on the move from camp to camp. Colonization has taken its toll on Native peoples, but perhaps it has taken is greatest toll on women. While all Natives experience racism, Native women suffer from sexism as well. Racism and sexism found in the colonial process have served to dramatically undermine the place and value of women in aboriginal cultures leaving them vulnerable both within and outside our communities (La Rocque 11). As colonial subjects, the Canadian Native women and Dalit women in India suffered many things in common. Discrimination, disempowerment, sexual abuse, non-recognition of their role in society are only a few of them.

The writings of these "doubly marginalised" groups in postcolonial countries like Australia, Canada and India are attempts to rewrite the histories from their perspectives. Their writings are attempts to resist the many-sided "invasion" of the imperialism as well as forces of internal colonialism. In this sense, they are also "righters" of history.

As the writings of Native women in Canada and Dalit women in India are also part of a feminist writing, it should be made clear that these writings differ from White women writings as they take into consideration the question of race and caste also. The flourishing of cultural productions by Aboriginal women in Canada are transforming the theoretical presuppositions of Post colonialist and feminist critique. They also have criticized the imperialist assumptions of "self identified" First Worldist Feminist practices. Though Canadian Native women writers are aware of the risk involved in a feminist analysis that

limits its discussion exclusively to the issue of gender, Dalit women has not yet been able to assume the Fourth World feminist position. Patricia A. Monture, a Mohawk belonging to the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy says: "You cannot ask me to speak as woman because I cannot speak as just a women. This is not the voice that I have been given, Gender does not transcend race".

White women in America, Canada or Australia remains British, American or Canadian and enjoy the privileges of that status, howsoever much they claim that they are just women. African-American, Native, Aboriginal and Dalit women on the other hand, cannot be unproblematically American, Canadian, Australian and Indian respectively—as those with privileged ethnicities claim to be—because their other identities (race and caste) put them at a disadvantage in racist/casteist Nation state.

Aboriginal women fare worse than aboriginal men do for they are victims of both racism and sexism. This doubly oppressed position of aboriginal/Dalit women is neither completely understood by their own men nor by White/Upper caste feminists. "Like other women of colour, aboriginal women feel that feminism must be contextualised; one cannot assume a commonality among the interests and objectives of all women" (*Vivianna* 264). Emma La Roque also argues: "I as a native women am compelled to pursue and express my scholarship quite differently from the way my non-native counterparts do" (13).

Both Native and Dalit woman writers are in fact women "righters" and like Toni Cade Bambara, they are also creators of "art for survival". They are appreciated by their people who maintain that writing is perfectly legitimate way to participate in the struggle for survival and liberation.

Before European contact, Native women played an essential economic role and men did not enjoy greater status or prestige but rather the work of men and women was complementary. Native women's skills were very much appreciated and they were symbols of traditional strength and power. Only through the involvement in the European fur trade were a woman placed in an inferior position to males. Between wife and husband in aboriginal families, there exists a loving relationship based on shared work that plays a positive role.

Since majorities of Dalits do not have property reserves and every individual must therefore work for the family, women are thoroughly integrated into their productive labour system. Dalit women possess enormous skills; they are excellent soil examiners, planters, breeders and selectors of seeds. They are also huge stores of traditional systems of knowledge.

Women's role in aboriginal families continues to a great extent as before, providing security and stability. As they are not only creators of life and culture but also perpetuators, women were perhaps more essential to family and band survival than ever before. Even in those days of great destitution and upheaval, the women kept alive traditions of communal activity and sharing of resources. Women on reserves lost this position of authority in family matters such as how the food resource was to be distributed to the Indian agent and to the Christian missionaries.

Except for a few isolated examples, First Nations People of Canada and Dalits in India have been systematically excluded from attaining high education and thus prevented their entry into the professions. Yet they have articulated their problems and issues powerfully in their writings for the past few decades. Native literature in Canada and Dalit literature in India though made their debut in the thirties it became strong during the later part of the Sixties and Seventies. Just as the voices of indigenous people as a whole remain excluded from the official/colonialist/mainstream systems of knowledge production in the dominant discourses, the voices of aboriginal women also suffered exclusion and the voices of Canadian Native women and Indian Dalit woman was heard through publication of their works only in the seventies.

Unlike Dalit women in India, Native Canadian women had produced a vibrant body of literature—poems, tales, autobiography, novels, prose pieces and plays. They have their own publications and journals now. But Stri Dalit Sahitya has joined the malestream Dalit writers only recently in India with atleast a dozen women poet from Maharashtra. A couple of autobiographies, several books of short stories, essays, an illustrated book on what women contributed to the movement of untouchables under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar are now available. Unfortunately, this is more or less confined to the Marathi-speaking area of India, as Eleanor Zelliot points out (65). She argues that the fourteenth century Bhakti movement, the nineteenth century Reform movement and the twentieth century ability of women to create meaningful literature are part of the background of the emergence of Stri Dalit sahitya (66).

These writings emerge out of an experience of their resistance to the "colonized" and constitutes an important representation and were the result of the need to confront the racist/casteist assumptions. Hence texts by aboriginal women demand to be read in the context of resistance, in particular, resistance to the structures of internal colonialism in Canada and India. Aboriginal texts from Canada and Australia also resist normal conventions of literary classifications. They not only resist replacement in the categories "minority" or "ethnic" but the conceptual borders that line the pockets of genre are also blurred. A kind of interfusion or hybrididy is the result. For instance, Beth Brant's *Mohawk Trail* (1985) is a miscellany containing autobiography, short stories, poems and a reconstructed American

Indian myth. Lee Maracle's *I am Woman* is another example. Hence, these texts can be described as "writings" rather than literature. But Dalit women writings in India has not yet reached that stage. Whereas the contemporary Native writings are a product of seventh generation, Dalit writings are the impassioned voice of the third generation of Ambedkarite movement (Dangle xiv).

Though Native women writings and Stri Dalit sahitya are feminist in impulse, the colonialist assumptions in academic feminist theory make it difficult for these writers to align themselves with this and other dominant forms of feminisms. Kate Shanley's explanation regarding the difference between Indian feminism and White/mainstream feminism in her article "Thoughts on Indian Feminism" is also true of Dalit women. Academic feminism (theoretical feminism of the University) constitute something different from the "grass-root" feminism of "Other" women. Though key issues to the majority women movement affect Indian women as well, equality per se, may have a different meaning for Indian women. (1) On the individual level, the Indian women struggle to promote the survival of a social structure whose organizational principles present notions of family different from those of the mainstream and (2) On the social level, the people seek sovereignty as a people in order to maintain a vital legal and spiritual connection to the land, in order to survive as people (214).

The desire on the part of mainstream feminists in both India and Canada to include Indian/Dalit women represents tokenism, and they are seen more as artifacts than as real people to speak for themselves. Given the public general ignorance about Indigenous peoples, First Nations/Dalit women's real—life concerns are not relevant to the mainstream feminist movement in a way that constitute anything more than a representative façade. This problem raises important questions about the formation of collective resistance among women when the cultural and political interests and experiences of "Other" women are either ignored, dismissed or simply taken for granted. Though Aboriginal women writers placed feminist theory in the 1980s as a self reflexive process of examining its own racism and ethnocentrism, it failed to consider what Aboriginal women said about their particular concern within the movement.

In fact, both in their characterization and as writing subjects, aboriginal women are writing themselves and their people into history as subjects to and of their own making. As agents of their own historical traditions, they are claiming an unambiguous self-determination to tell their own stories, and are doing it in their own way. As Dionne Brand says: they do not write from the margins of colonial tradition but from the centre of Aboriginal tradition. Because, though the deprivations, exploitations and oppressions suffered by Native and Dalit women are almost identical in Canada and India, there are basic differences in the value systems and historical circumstances in which they are pitched. Aparna Basu and

Meenalochana Vats who enumerates the "vast social, economic and cultural dissimilarities between Canada and India" also reminds us that "there is much in common between them in terms of experience of patriarchy and challenges to it" (xviii-xix).

Despite similarities, the creative expression of Native Canadian women is far better in quantity and quality than Dalit women writing in India. Whereas Native women writing has emerged as a vibrant body and has become unavoidable in any discussion of Canadian literature, Dalit women writing has not yet reached that status in the discussion of Indian literatures. The educational and economic backwardness among Dalit women has precluded them from producing works comparable to *Half Breed* (Maria Campbell), *In Search of April Rain Tree*(Beatrice Culleton) *Slash* (Jeannette Armstrong), *I am Woman* (Lee Maracle), or *Honour the Sun* (Ruby Slipperjack). Much of Stri Dalit sahitya available now is in the form of autobiographies, short stories and poems. However, what is attempted here is a comparative analysis of the poems of Canadian Native women and Dalit women in India.

Because of the collective trauma experienced by the native people, the majority of authors lament the loss of lives, land and language in their poems. Some contain nostalgia for the past hatred for European sellters who caused that loss, rejection of dominant society, relationship with Earth and Native's struggle for self-determination. Their poems also speak of the spiritual relationship between Native people and their surroundings, something, which is summed up in the phrase "All My Relations". Native Women's poems are the result of a growing pride in nativeness, and their contents and message reflect the process of growing socio-political and cultural emancipation of First Nations people in Canada.

The poems of Jeannette Armstrong, prominent among contemporary Native women writers, express a conscious seeking and offering as well as an unconscious renewal from contact with the past. Her "Blood of my people" courses through veins of her family, her tribe, her race, binds them, raises them for one intense moment to whirl, to dance, before settling quietly back in to soil (Kudchedkar 26). Images of past injustice and a suggestive irony of diction characterize her "history lesson" in which she recalls the history of Canadian "discovery" and settlement. This poem emerges as an indictment of European conquest and colonization.

Meena Gajbhiye one of the pioneers of Sri-Dalit Sahitya in her poem "Light Melted in Darkness" also speak of similar experience:

. . .I melt

in the empty space of darkness . . .

I am entangled in Python-coils

For ages (Dangle 53).

In "Dark Forest" Armstrong laments the untimely death of a young political activist

of the American Indian Movement in a warm and loving tribute. Hira Bansode's poem "O Great Man" is honour of Babasaheb Ambedkar, the unquestionable leader of the Untouchable's Movement who fought against the denial of human rights to Dalits. She writes:

It is clear that nature belongs to all
but these people bought that too
Every drop of water in Cawdar Tank
was stamped with their name,
the alert watchman of this culture
guarded the imprisoned water
They roared that your touch
would poison the water and
they anointed you with your blood
when you were dying of thirst. (Anand 33)

Armstrong is a women of strong sympathies and warm passions. Her poetry is direct, unequivocal, assertive and even aggressive. Her poems grapple with the grim realities of the contemporary native Canadian experience and tell the uncomfortable truths (Petronne 163).

Hira Bansode, "and ebullient feminist" criticizes Indians' treatment of all women. Her poem "Slave" portrays the enslaved position of Indian women thus:

where Sita entered the fire to prove her fidelity
where Shilya was turned stone because of Indra's lust
where Droupadi was fractured to serve five husbands
in that country a woman is still a slave (Qtd. in Veena Deo and Zelliot 44).

The poet who has worked all her life to earn her livelihood also asserts that since "Woman do equal work" "They should have equal rights" (Qtd. in Zelliot 71). Her poem "Yasodhara", which deconstructs the image of Yasodhara, wife of Buddha, as an inspiration to him, could be written only by an Indian feminist: She writes:

. . . He [Buddha] went, he conquered, he shone.
While you listened to the songs of his triumph
your womanliness must have wept.
you who lost husband and son
must have felt uprooted
like the tender banana plant.

But history doesn't talk about
the great story of your sacrifice.

.....

I am ashamed of injustice
you are not to be found
in a single Buddhist Vihara
were you really of no account? (Qtd. in Dangle 32)

Beth Cuthand's "Post-Oka Kinda Woman" also projects the Canadian Native feminist position who is "done with victimisation, separation/degradation, assimilation/ devolution [and] cokkled colusion". She continues:

Post-Oka woman she's strutting her stuff
Not walkin' one step behind her man.
She don't take that shit
Don't need it! Don't want it
You want her then treat her right (*Gatherings* 262).

Like the activist Native women poets (Jeannette Armstrong and Beatriace Culleton) who fight for their traditional cultural and landrights, Dalit women poets also identify completely with grassroots level Dalit women and are in the forefront of Dalit movement and struggle for human rights—temple entry and drinking water and against Devadasi (Temple Prostitute) system. For instance, one of the "Revolution" poem of Jyothi Longiwar titled "The Nameless Ones' says:

Begging won't get anything here
not sympathy, not love,
a suit in court wins injustice,
tears are of no value
Getting water is a struggle (Qtd. in Zelliot 79)

While both Canadian native women and Dalit women write about contemporary issues from a Fourth World Feminist position, they do keep their inspiration from Mothers and Grand Mothers who are the creators of their culture. Both these groups of writers yearn to learn from their elders and from ancient oral traditions. Armstrong dedicates her volume of poetry *Breath Tracks* to her Okanagan grandmother. "Whose blood and words live inside [her]".

Mark Sky Blue Morin makes her poetry chiefly out of the tradition and ceremonies of her people. She writes:

I Dream of Buffalo Days

Sweet grass

The women's sweet lodge

A Healing Time (Petronne 164)

Her poems though modest and slight, convey a strong sense of cultural values from which she obtains strength (Petronne 166).

Lonjewar's "Mother" also acknowledges the struggle of Dalit mothers for survival:

I have seen you

at the front of Long March

at the front of your sari tucked tightly at the waist

shouting "change the name"

taking the blow of the police stick on you upraised hands

going to jail with head held high

. . . I have seen you

saying when your only son

fell martyr to police bullets

'You died for Bhim, you death means something'

saying boldly to the police

'If I had two or three sons, I would be fortunate

they would fight on' (Qtd. in Zelliot 83)

Marie Anne harte Baker's "Moon bear" merges both the metaphors in the title (Moon and Bear) important to Native Indians—menstrual time is known as "Moon time" and Bear is the archetypal mother figure—to express her power as a women and as a source of life.

To conclude, the past five hundred years of colonization have seen a subordination of these colored women. Attempts by the dominant cultures in both Canada and India to wipe out these native voices have met with stiff resistance in different forms. Their writings is one of the major tools for the empowerment of these doubly oppressed people.

In recent years, the Native women in Canada and Dalit women in India have broken their silence and raised their voices to provide solace to the thousands of young indigenous peoples who have been struggling to survive. What holds them together is the feeling of sisterhood—commonness as "Other" women. They came from different nations; their stories are not the same; their dress is not the same; their colour is not the same. Yet, they are the

same. Their poems spread the message of resistance against dominant cultural hegemony by recreating their own history, tradition and affirm their distinct cultures.

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Dept. of English
Calicut University

Artistic Subjectivity in Nabokov's *The Defense* and *Invitation to a Beheading*

LORNA FITZSIMMONS

Deliberately inverting what he terms the "artificial logical world" of commonsense, which squares off the sublime rotundity of life, Vladimir Nabokov contends in his *Lectures on Literature* that to develop the capacity to marvel at seemingly trivial details—"the footnotes in the volume of life"— is to achieve the "highest" form of consciousness (372, 374). By promoting skepticism toward prevailing conceptions of truth, this "childishly speculative" state functions to activate a creatively ironic stance toward existence, a view akin to Schiller's notion of the "play impulse" in *The Aesthetic Education of Man.* "No doubt the artist is the child of his time," writes Schiller, but "let him return to his century as an alien figure," freed from the "corruptions" of the present age by "disdaining its opinion" (51-52). For Nabokov, irony is the *sine qua non* of great artistic achievement. It is with the exegesis of the role of irony in the artist's life that much of his fiction is involved. Just as Thomas Mann upholds the ironic over and above the overtly political in art while contending that artistic critique serves as humanity's "suffering leader" (499), Nabokov believes in the collective value of the ironic artistic consciousness as a means by which to catalyze the evolution of the human mind. Written during his Berlin period, *The Defence* and *Invitation to a Beheading* are characteristically Nabokovian in their reflexive concern with creative subjectivity.

Although Nabokov repeatedly voiced his antipathy toward literary didacticism, especially that of his Russian forebears, his view that art is *"Beauty plus pity"* leads him to entreat others to "bless the freak" (*Lectures* 251, 372):

> *Stranger* always rhymes with *danger*. The meek prophet, the enchanter in his cave, the indignant artist, the nonconforming little schoolboy, all share in the same sacred danger. And this being so, let us bless them, let us bless the freak; for in the natural evolution of things, the ape would perhaps never have become man had not a freak appeared in the family" (372).

In both *The Defense* and *Invitation to a Beheading*, Nabokov's pity is extended towards the misfit artist, stigmatized by an intolerant society. The protagonist of each novel is mistreated by the insensitivity of philistines around him, the object of Nabokov's rapier wit. As Robert Alter has argued, the playfully "ostentatious artifice" in Nabokov's writing serves a serious social function (44). The author's satiric indictment of social pressures to conform is complemented by the foregrounded reflexive devices through which his texts espouse a relativistic position that debunks absolutism as inherently absurd. While *The Defense* demonstrates the deleterious consequences of the absolutist fallacy, *Invitation to a Beheading* becomes a celebration of the regenerative effects associated with recognizing its falsity.

The Defense details the rise and fall of the tragic chessplayer, Aleksandr Ivanovich Luzhin. As a child, introverted Luzhin discovers that the realm of artificial patterns—mathematics, detective novels, magic, jigsaws, and eventually chess—offers a harmonious refuge from his unpredictable world. Luzhin senior writes mediocre children's books and dreams of his son emulating the musician heroes of his novels; but chess is Luzhin's destiny. Increasingly seeking "illusory relief" in chess problems, the child prodigy emerges as a champion of international renown. Luzhin's obsessive preoccupation with order grows until his conception of reality and illusion becomes inverted—"everything apart from chess was only an enchanting dream" (133)—and he suffers a mental collapse. His eventual return to the familiar world is only temporary, however, for his obsession leads him to detect a "fatal combination" governing the seeming pattern of his own life. Imagining himself a pawn in a game directed by a malevolent opponent, he decides upon his ultimate defense: suicide.

Luzhin's is the case of the artist—a motif of music metaphors underscores the artistic nature of his chess endeavors—who retreats from society's dominant conventions with increasing alienation and paranoia, compelling him towards the pattern of "dark and pale squares" he sees as eternity (256). His weakness lies in the hypertrophy of the form impulse within his mind, undermining his capacity to retain an ironic posture toward his own creative powers. To Schiller, the play impulse is a liberating drive that aims at "the extinction of time *in time*" by combining the temporal thrust of the sense impulse with the atemporality of the form impulse (74). "The sense impulse wants to *be* determined, to receive its object; the form impulse wants to determine for itself, to produce its object ...." (Schiller 74). Luzhin's fatal pursuit of the final defense against himself is tantamount to a reflexive knight's move, a chess move which, as Victor Shklovsky quips in his formalist

treatise on the "conventions of art," *The Knight's Move*, is a paradoxically conventional "oddity" (qtd. in Erlich 190-191), a trope used in several of Nabokov's novels which is symptomatic here of the character's increasingly destructive narcissism as he lives his life as if it were a chess game. His end is that of the uroborus, the infinite regress of serpentine self-pursuit, a Russian roulette anticipated by his delight in the orderliness of "chess life," about which he "noted with pride how easy it was for him to reign . . .and the way everything obeyed his will and bowed to his schemes" (134).

Despite the apparent fatalism of its bends sinister, however, the deconstructive turns of *The Defense* nevertheless figure an ironic artistry foiling that of the protagonist. Most clearly, the reader is constantly reminded of the protagonist's fictionality by the sound correspondence between his name, Luzhin, and "illusion," which Nabokov underscores in the Foreword (7). The same point is made more subtly early in the narrative when young Luzhin attempts to "bring to life" five glass-encased dolls in a coin-operated machine: his coin fails to do the job (20). As a trope of the text, he is as much a trick as the optical illusion or the "coming-to-life" of a mechanical doll. Demonstrating Luzhin's penchant for illusory diversion, this image functions as a proleptic *mise en abyme* foreshadowing his social, professional, and mortal failure. The corresponding glass motif magnifies the trope. Not only does Luzhin revel in detecting optical illusions, he is frequently portrayed as either viewing the world, or being viewed by another character, through glass structures: hiding in the attic as a child, he peers down at his pursuers through the small rooftop window (23); at school he hides in the vestibule and watches his father through the glass of the door (29); his future wife first views him through a window (84); at the height of his mental breakdown he gets shoved through a revolving "glass radiance" (revolving doors) (141); seemingly recuperating, he gazes at the "shining blue" window in his hospital room (159); and finally, he commits suicide by plunging through a skyscraper window (253). As if glass-encased, Luzhin is estranged from the world by the invisible distinctiveness of his imagination. Unlike most, however, who are mechanical in their conformity, Luzhin possesses great imaginative ability, but lacking the critical self-consciousness which springs from synchrony between the sense and form impulses, he cannot imagine himself freely alive. The coming-of-age of Cincinnatus, in *Invitation to a Beheading*, involves the realization of this freedom.

Like *The Defense*, *Invitation to a Beheading* depicts an artistic individual vilified by philistines. The two artists differ, however, in the source and extent of their maltreatment. Luzhin's antagonists are of his immediate milieu: his schoolmates, chess clique, and his family circle by marriage, who are intolerant of his creativity and either reject or verbally harass him: " 'What is he? Certainly not a real person,' " declares his mother-in-law, " 'He's God knows what. And I'll guarantee he has a Soviet passport. A Bolshevik, just a Bolshevik'" (108). In *Invitation to a Beheading*, Cincinnatus' difference incites the antipathy

of not only his immediate familiars, but of the whole society, represented by grotesque caricatures who penalize originality by execution.

The narrative opens with the announcement of the death sentence against Cincinnatus C., a kindergarten teacher. Small and submissive, Cincinnatus is led away to an "enormous fortress," in which he is the sole prisoner. For three torturous weeks he is kept in ignorance about his execution date. In anguish over the uncertainty, he turns to reading and writing for relief. "Opaque" in a world where "translucence" is the rule, he only feigns obedience, however. "'I have no desires,' he writes, 'save the desire to express myself—in defiance of all the world's muteness'" (91). He ruminates upon his life, his dreams of an "ennobled, spiritualized world," and his imminent death, while dwelling pon the beauty perceivable in even the most mundane, including his treacherous wife. Led to expect an interview from her, he is suddenly introduced to his cell neighbor, M'sieur Pierre. This egocentric photography enthusiast is a master trickster who employs all his skills in an attempt to win Cincinnatus' favor. Between his disappointing visit from his wife—she brings her extended family, her furniture, and her lover—and a temporary uplifting interview with his mother, Cincinnatus suffers through M'sieur Pierre's efforts to "amuse" him. At night, he is bothered by the muffled sounds of someone digging. The sounds grow nearer and his rescue seems imminent, but out of the tunnel appear M'sieur Pierre and the prison director. His seeming co-prisoner is a maestro entertainer, a national hero, "the pet of women, the darling of everyone"—the state executioner. Shortly after this revelation, M'sieur Pierre finally leads Cincinnatus off "to do chop-chop." The equipment is staged, the crowds shouting, but as M'sieur Pierre brings down the axe, Cincinnatus walks off from the scaffold, his antagonists disintegrating behind him.

Written in 1934, five years after *The Defence*, *Invitation to a Beheading* demonstrates Nabokov's continuing concern with the struggles of the artistic individual. Estranged from the hostile world like a glass-encased doll, Luzhin becomes the beleaguered puppet of his own belligerent imaginings. While Cincinnatus also attempts to "encase" himself, the defensive mask that he dons proves to be a source of psychological malaise from which he eventually breaks free. His struggle is symbolized by the magnificent moth, considered a "monster" fit only to be fed to the obese cell spider, which is captured by the jailor shortly before the execution (203). Like Cincinnatus, the moth has deceptive features-eyespots and a "white-dappled abdomen"—to confuse its predators. The two also have a paradoxical sense of time: for the moth, "daytime is dark," an inversion paralleling Cincinnatus' view that "the rare kind of time in which I live [is] the pause, the hiatus, when the heart is like a feather" (53), an intimation of the liberating "extinction of time *in time*" which is a function of his emergent play impulse. When Cincinnatus later predicts that "the

moth will fly away at night through the broken window," his own liberation is foreshadowed (211).

A perverse double, M'sieur Pierre embodies conformist corruption spawned by the disjunction between the sense and form impulses, thereby hindering the realization of the play impulse. The two characters are the same age and are equally honored and identically clad during the pre-execution banquet, which smacks of a wedding feast. First seeming to be Cincinnatus' rescuer, the executioner is finally debunked as a false savior. Among the "transparent" conformists, "[s]pecters, werewolves, parodies" masquerading as people, however, M'sieur Pierre is considered the consummate artist. Significantly, he is a photography enthusiast, whose bulging wallet, filled with shots of himself, is symptomatic of a narcissistic culture incarcerated by photographic illusionism: newspapers always "teem" with color photographs (23); "photohoroscopes" use retouched photographs to predict the "natural progression of a given person's life" (170); M'sieur Pierre and Cincinnatus are photographed together at the pre-exucution banquet (190) and numerous photographers are amongst the crowds gathered in Thriller Square before the execution (217).

Like the "cute calender" depiction of the fortress that M'sieur Pierre considers a "work of art," literature in this society is as unimaginative as the photography. The "famous" novel *Quercus*, "considered to be the acme of modern thought," is a one-thousand-page biography of an oak (123). A parody of documentary realism, it attempts to record all the events possibly witnessed by the oak, the result being that it seems "as though the author were sitting with his camera somewhere among the topmost branches of the Quercus" (123; Alter 54). Never having bothered with this novel before his incarceration, Cincinnatus plods though it with "dull distress," finding it irrelevant to his predicament. To M'sieur Pierre and his cronies, documentary realism constitutes art, as underscored by a number of mirror images in the text. An important exception to this is the case of the special mirror that turns "nonnons," or absurd, shapeless objects, into beautiful forms (135), symbolizing Cincinnatus' creative opacity, the antithesis of the photographic and literary realism of his oppressors, for, like Schiller, Nabokov scorns mimetic simulation as an impediment to freedom (Schiller 128).

Ironically, Cincinnatus' "beheading" is self-induced, functioning as a reflexive trope for the liberating effects of the play impulse. Unlike Luzhin's desperate suicide, Cincinnatus' self-destruction is a joyful, regenerative act suggesting the imaginary decapitation of his conformist other, anathema of the form impulse. Living in a "world of souls transparent to one another," all his life Cincinnatus has had to "feign translucence" (24). "[C]lutching his own self to his breast, [he] would remove that self to a safe place" (24). Faced with death, he gradually dismantles the panoply of this pretense and allows his artistry free rein. This liberating process of self-realization correlates with his increasing

detachedness toward the world of his adversaries. As long as his other sustains belief in the immutable actuality of their world, he allows and supports its existence. To believe in his adversaries is "infect them with truth" (138, 156). But with the exercise of his critical consciusness, Cincinnatus envisages the possibility of alternative worlds and gains an ironic awareness of his ability to passively sustain or actively reconstruct reality. The growth of his play drive advances him to a higher state of physical and moral existence, for he is freed from the determinism of the sense impulse while simultaneously compelled beyond passivity, thereby exhibiting the creativity faciliated by the synthesis of the sense and moral impulses (Schiller 74). Finally conscious of his power to choose, he walks off the platform as it disintegrates and proceeds to "make his way in that direction where, to judge by the voices, stood beings akin to him" (Nabokov 223), an epiphany recalling Schiller's account of the "two fold experience" of beautification, whereby the subject is "at once conscious of his freedom and sensible of his existence," thus realizing a "complete intuition of his humanity" (Schiller 73-74).

For Nabokov, higher art is not mimetic but, rather, endows "the lifeless with life," the "meaningless with meaning" (155). In his *Lectures on Literature*, he argues that the materials of the world are chaotic until the artist allows them "to flicker and to fuse" (2). To believe in any such fusions is to "infect them with truth," but to realize the myriad diversity of patterns into which the chaotic materials of existence may be structured is to attain the higher and more humane state of consciousness irony yields.

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California State University,
Dominguez Hills

Kafka's 'The New Attorney': A Therapeutic Poem Offering a Jewish Way to Face Death

MARTIN WASSERMAN

Most people think of the German-Jewis7h writer, Franz Kafka, solely as a novelist and as a creator of short stories. However, in an anthology of modern Jewish poetry, published in 1980, the editors asserted that some of Kafka's writing "can truly be said to be prose poetry" (Schwartz and Rudolf 836). This contention would not have surprised Kafka's close friend, Jiri Langer, who himself was a poet. Langer stated, "Kafka was an original person in an absolute sense. A poet—but his way in sacred matters was not to show his originality" (Oppenheimer 303). When Kafka died, Langer wrote a poem honoring his memory, entitled "On the Death of a Poet" (Oppenheimer 303).

Literary criticism of Kafka's work has also viewed many of his writings as being a form of poetry. Bezzel sees Kafka's work as poetic because through it he created a system of symbols which allowed for a completely modern method of communication (124). For Sussman, Kafka's work is essentially poetic because of its great mystery. Speaking on this matter, he says that Kafka's "fictive process . . . is similar to poetry. The poetic process—whether described as 'staging,' 'framing,' 'unfolding,' or "metaphor"—is distinguished precisely by the inability to anticipate when and what it will produce" (22).

Selden Rodman has edited an anthology of modern poetry, described as "distinctive for its selection of important European poets in translation" (McDonald 1909). In this anthology, Kafka's work, "The New Attorney," has been selected as one of the most significant poems of the twentieth-century.[1] The purpose of the present paper will be to show that Kafka wrote his poem, "The New Attorney," in order to declare that he had found a Jewish approach to face his death; a death which he believed would occur in the near future because of the foreboding nature of his severe medical symptoms. I will demonstrate that Kafka, in "The New Attorney," was stating that he was going to function as an intepreter of Jewish law; and by assuming this role, he would likely achieve a rewarding afterlife. Also, I will make the case that the poem, "The New Attorney," by providing Kafka with a path towards immortality, served a definite therapeutic purpose because it succeeded in giving him the courage to face his death.

Concern with Death

In an extensive study of creative artists, Jacques found that most of these talented individuals personalized the subject of death in their work between the ages of thirty-five and forty (149-150). Kafka wrote "The New Attorney," in January 1917, when he was thirty-three years old. However, there was good reason for Kafka to have been concerned about death at a slightly earlier age than most other creative artists: he had experienced adverse medical symptoms, starting in 1911. These symptoms included insomnia, profuse sweating, high fever, intense stomach cramps, severe headaches, and frequent anxiety attacks (Citati 174).

Both Citati (173) and Jofen (2) claim that Kafka knew he was suffering from tuberculosis in January 1917, although he did not receive a medical diagnosis for his condition until September 1917. They point to the fact that some of the stories Kafka wrote shortly after "The New Attorney" clearly indicate a personal awareness of the disease. For example, Citati contends that Kafka had foretold his condition in "A Country Doctor" when the physician discovers in the boy's right side a wound "pink in color, with diverse shades, dark at the bottom, lighter towards the edges, slightly granulated, with irregular clots of blood" (173). Jofen uses as an example "A Report to an Academy" where Kafka, in the guise of the ape, Rotpeter, "has the red spots often seen on the faces of T.B. patients—thus probably also explaining the name 'Rotpeter' (20).

Kafka, in his autobiographical writings, also gives credence to the idea that he knew he was suffering from tuberculosis before the actual diagnosis of September 4, 1917. Kafka wrote in his diary on September 18, 1917 that "it is the age of the infection rather than its depth and festering which makes it painful" (*Diaries* 183). Kafka wrote to a friend in early September that "the illness . . . I have been inducing for years with my headaches and insomnia has now suddenly erupted" (*Memory* 154). Unfortunately, in 1917, pulmonary tuberculosis, the illness about which Kafka was commenting, generally proved to be fatal since it "accounted for 30 percent of all deaths in Prague" (Pawel 362).

In "The New Attorney," which Kafka wrote during January 1917, he clearly expressed great concern about his likely death by the inclusion of Alexander the Great in this work. For Kafka, the figure of Alexander symbolized his own death as he later conveyed in an aphorism written in January 1918.

> Death is in front of us, rather as on the schoolroom wall there is a reproduction of Alexander's Battle. The thing is to darken, or even indeed to blot out, the picture in this one life of ours through our actions. (*Dearest Father* 144).

We see by the aphorism that death, for Kafka, is associated with the image of Alexander the Great and that anything which can be done to "blot out" the image would prove to be therapeutic. This paper will soon show that Kafka, through his poem, "The New Attorney," not only expressed great concern over his own personal death but also offered a way to ultimately overcome his gloomy Alexander image (i.e., personal death looming in the near-future).

The Connection with Judaism

Max Brod, who was Kafka's closest friend, said of him that in early 1917 he "was drifting . . . into Judaism" (Hayman 220). Studies by Strauss, Robertson, and Oppenheimer have all supported Brod's contention. Kafka himself reinforced this claim when he said of his creative work written between 1917 and 1922 that "if Zionism had not intervened, it might easily have developed into a new secret doctrine, a Kabbalah" (*Memory* 212).

Kafka, speaking specifically about his collection of writings which appeared under the title, *Ein Landarzt [A Country Doctor]*, of which "The New Attorney," was the first offering, stated:

> Ever since I decided to dedicate the book to my father, I am anxious for it to appear as soon as possible . . . At least I will have done something, not perhaps settled in Palestine, but at least traveled there with my finger on the map. (Pawel 307-38).

Undoubtedly the strongest evidence that "The New Attorney" has a connection to Judaism is that Kafka offered this prose poem to the philosopher, Martin Buber, to be published in a journal edited by Buber, called *Der Jude [The Jew]* (Kafka, *Memory* 152). Buber's editorial policy was to accept only articles that bore some relationship to Judaism (Oppenheimer 29-30). As far as Buber was concerned, *Der Jude* "was designed as a forum of ideas new and reviving in the German-speaking Jewish community, a rallying-point for resurgent Jewish national identity, and a guiding, creative force in the search for the new Judaism" (Oppenheimer 29). Under these circumstances, it is unlikely that Kafka would have submitted "The New Attorney" to Buber unless he himself believed that his prose poem had a substantial Jewish content.[2]

Ideological Immortality

Blanton has recommended that poetry be used as a therapeutic resource in cases where an individual is frightened over the prospect of his or her personal death (57-85). According to Blanton, poetry has the ability to offer "a common sense note that should be pondered by those who are obsessed by fear of dying" (59). Blanton believes that one way

a poem can function in a therapeutic manner is if it offers its reader or writer a way to achieve immortality (78-79).

Rank identifies this particular function of poetry as "ideological immortality" (288-289). Rank says of poets that their creative work is an attempt to attain immortality by providing the basis for "actualizing their thought, their wish, or their word" (289). Thus, for Rank, poetry provides a creative outlet by which one can find a successful approach to immortality.

For Jung, finding an appropriate way to achieve immortality is, by necessity, therapeutic (110-114). Commenting on the relationship among the fear of death, striving for immortality, and the idea goal of therapy, Jung states:

> When I live in a house which I know will fall about my head within the next two weeks, all my vital functions will be impaired by this thought; but if on the contrary I feel myself to be safe, I can dwell there in a normal and comfortable way. From the standpoint of psychotherapy it would therefore be desireable to think of death as only a transition—one part of a life-process whose extent and duration escape our knowledge. (112)

Because of this point of view, Jung says that he considers "the religious teaching of a life hereafter consonant with the standpoint of psychic hygiene" (112).

According to Lifton, one type of ideological immortality which has proven to be therapeutic is the theological idea of transcending death through spiritual attainment in life (6). It will shortly be argued that the poem, "The New Attorney," suggested the above approach, in that Kafka recognized through this work that if he committed himself to a pious existence while still alive, he would ultimately manage to overcome death.

"The New Attorney" and Its Jewish Sociological Context

At this juncture of the paper it would be appropriate to look at the prose poem, "The New Attorney." Since this work is relatively short, and because I am treating it as a poetic creation, I will offer a full rendering of "The New Attorney" as it appears in Rodman's *One Hundred Modern Poems*.

> We have a new attorney, Dr. Bucephalus. There is little about his external appearance to remind one of the time when he was still Alexander of Macedonia's charger. But anyone familiar with such matters can still notice something. Did I not just lately see even a quite simple court

attendant stare at the lawyer with the professional eye of a modest racetrack follower as the latter, lifting his legs high, mounted the stairs step by step, with a tread that made the marble ring?

The bar in general approved of Bucephalus' admission. They tell themselves, with amazing insight, that Bucephalus' position under our present social system is a difficult one and that he therefore—and also because of his world-historical significance—deserves to be met halfway. Today, as no one can deny, there is no Alexander the Great. Many, of course, still know how to murder; nor is there any lack of skill at stabbing your friend over the banquet table with a lance; and for many Macedonia is too narrow, so that they curse Phillip, the father—but no one, no one can lead us to India. Even in those days India's gates were unattainable, but their direction was designated by the royal sword. Today the gates have been shifted elsewhere and higher and farther away; many hold swords but only to flourish them, and the glance that tries to follow them becomes confused.

Therefore it may really be best, perhaps, to do as Bucephalus has done and bury oneself in the law books. Free, his flanks unpressed by the thighs of a rider, under a quiet lamp, far from the din of Alexander's battles, he reads and turns the pages of our old books. (42-43)

According to Oppenheimer, Kafka, in "The New Attorney," is represented by the horse, Dr. Bucephalus (262). This connection is clearly demonstrated by Dr. Bucephalus choosing law as an occupation, and in this chosen profession being only half-heartedly accepted as a lawyer by his peers. Kafka himself chose law as a profession and he spent most of his adult life toiling for the Workmen's Accident Insurance Institute of Prague which rarely employed Jews. In fact, until 1848, Jews were not allowed to practice law at all in Prague, and even though, by the turn of the century, they were admitted to the bar, it was still very difficult for them to gain acceptance in governmental agencies (Pawel 181-182). Thus, we see in "The New Attorney" that Kafka, the Jew, would never be entirely accepted as a peer by his fellow Gentile lawyers but could only be met "halfway" by them in the "present social system."

Not only does Kafka, in "The New Attorney," comment upon the type of relationship which existed between Jew and Gentile, he also expresses the hostility that typified the relationship between Jew and fellow Jew in turn-of-the-century Europe. The dramatist, Arthur Schnitzler, who lived during this period of time, said "that a Jew never really respected

another Jew, as little as prisoners in an enemy country respect each other" (Stolzl 54). Stolzl, writing specifically about Jewish anti-Semitism in Prague, stated that these Jews "knew each other so well they can inflict far deeper wounds than any outsider can" (55). Speaking in a more literary manner about Jewish anti-Semitism, Kafka, in "The New Attorney," declares: ". . . nor is there any lack of skill at stabbing your friend over the banquet table with a lance." It is because of statements like this one which lead Oppenheimer to believe that "The New Attorney" is, in part, depicting the tragic predicament of Jewish anti-Semitism amongst German-speaking Jews (262-263).

It is no wonder, then, that Kafka, as Bucephalus, isolates himself from other human beings in the last paragraph of "The New Attorney." Kafka asserts in this final paragraph that he, Dr. Bucephalus, is most contended when "free, . . . under a quiet lamp, far from the din of Alexander's battles, he reads and turns the pages of our old books." Based on the symbolic connection which was made earlier in this paper between eliminating the picture of Alexander's battles and finding an approach to overcome personal death, one could say that Kafka is turning to the private world of books, rather than to the public world of disrespectful and rancorous human beings, when he anticipates his own death. This line of reasoning will become much clearer in the next section of the paper when an investigation is made of the horse as a symbol in Jewish theology.

Bucephalus and the Afterlife

According to Oppenheimer, when Kafka says in the last paragraph of "The New Attorney" that he is going to bury himself "in law books," the law being referred to is "the written traditions of Judaism" (262). This would make sense because Kafka had very little interest in the secular law of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which he practiced in his daily job. To show his disdain for this type of law, Kafka once claimed that "it intellectually fed on sawdust which moreover had already been pre-chewed by thousands of other mouths" (Pawel 122). Furthermore, it would make sense for Kafka to study Jewish law because, if he wanted to find an approach to overcome death as represented by "Alexander's battles," then Jewish law was replete with examples of individuals achieving immortality.[3]

By Kafka identifying with Alexander's horse, Bucephalus, in "The New Attorney," he is using the horse in the same way that it is used in some ancient Jewish burial places. According to Goodenough, the horse appears in a "Jewish burial place not as 'mere decoration,' but as a symbol of the hope of life to come" (8:148). This representation of the horse as a symbol of immortality is expressed most clearly by the rhetorical question Kafka asks in "The New Attorney."

> Did I not just lately see even a quite simple court attendant stare at the lawyer with the professional eye of a modest racetrack follower as the

latter, lifting his legs high, mounted the outside stairs step by step, with a tread that made the marble ring?

According to Goodenough, although the horse as a symbol of immortality might have had pagan origins, it was eventually adopted into Jewish theology (8:148). For example, Elijah was transported to heaven by a horse-drawn chariot (II Kings 2 11). Also, Enoch traveled through the heavens on both a horse and a horse-drawn chariot (Ginzberg 1:129). Since I believe the patriarch, Enoch, figures quite significantly in Kafka's discovery of an ideological immortality, more will be said about this subject in a subsequent section of the paper.

There is, however, another symbol representing death and the afterlife which Kafka uses in the rhetorical question from "The New Attorney." This is the symbol of the marble staircase which Bucephalus was earnestly climbing "step by step." According to Goodenough, pictures of steps are found on ancient Jewish funerary lamps and are to be thought of as a variant of Jacob's ladder (8:150). As such, Goodenough believes that the symbol of steps, either on a ladder or on a staircase, represents the hope of ultimate blessing in a future life (8:157). Relating this symbol to "The New Attorney," one could say that Kafka, as Dr. Bucephalus, is showing his desire for a beneficial afterlife by ascending the marble staircase.

A Jewish Legend of Alexander the Great

There is also a Jewish legend of Alexander the Great which plays an important role in viewing the content of "The New Attorney" as being related to Kafka's desire for a rewarding afterlife. I have already mentioned how Kafka used the "blotting out" of Alexander's battles as a symbol of overcoming personal death. The Jewish legend of Alexander expands upon this theme, and since Kafka owned a book, published in 1913, containing the legend, he would have no doubt read it before January 1917, when he wrote "The New Attorney."[4]

The legend relates that Alexander traveled to the Ganges River with some of his companions to discover an earthly paradise. Eventually, they arrived at an enormous wall which seemed to have no entrance. After journeying a few more days, they reached a gate which had been set into the wall. Alexander then sent a few of his companions to explore the gate. As they were scrutinizing it, an old man appeared. Alexander's men asked him to pay tribute to their great military leader. He would not. Instead, the old man said that inside the wall was a blessed abode, and that Alexander and his men could not stay any longer for they shortly would be drowned by the river's force. He then gave them a stone which had spiritual meaning to present to Alexander.

Alexander and his men returned home to Babylon where they presented the stone to all the sages in the land, asking each to unlock its riddle. Only an aged Jew, named Papas, was able to come up with the answer. He demonstrated that the stone outweighed any amount of gold. However, when the slightest amount of dust was sprinkled on the stone, then even the lightest feather could outweigh it. Papas' interpretation of this phenomenon was that God favored the ambitious conqueror, Alexander, while he was still alive, but after his death he would be deprived of all his vitality and merely turn into dust (Cary 19-20).

The connection between this Jewish legend of Alexander and "The New Attorney" is most evident when Kafka said of Alexander's exploits that "even in those days India's gates were unattainable; but their direction was designated by the Royal Sword." Both Robertson (139) and Oppenheimer (263) claim that what Kafka meant by this statement is that if persons were to attempt to achieve a paradisacal hereafter, they could not be preoccupied with materialistic strivings and aggressive yearnings like Alexander the Great. Being turned into dust after one's death, the fate of Alexander, was obviously not the type of afterlife Kafka had in mind for himself. Indeed, in Jewish tradition, the only persons who were not capable of enjoying some kind of afterlife were individuals, like Alexander, who suffered a violent death (Eliade 1:121).[5]

The Jewish legend of Alexander is also related to "The New Attorney," in that it depicts the futility of believing in a Messiah capable of bringing about the resurrection of the dead and the subsequent return of these resurrected individuals to the Jewish homeland of Israel. Both Robertson (139) and Oppenheimer (148 and 264) point out that Alexander the Great should be viewed only as a false Messiah. They claim that Kafka, in "The New Attorney," substituted India for Israel as being the earthly paradise. Thus, his statement, "for many Macedonia is too narrow. . . . but no one, no one can lead us to India" makes sense in light of the ultimate failure of the Messianic task.

At one time many Jewish sects believed that only a Messiah could bring about the ressurection of the dead and the recovery of a Jewish homeland (Scholem, *Messianic Idea* 157). However, with the advent of the Hasidic movement in eighteenth-century Europe, there occurred the neutralization of Messianism. The Hasidim believed, instead, that "every individual is the Redeemer, the Messiah of his own little world" (Scholem, *Messianic Idea* 262). According to Hasidic doctrine, a theology with which Bar-David (235-286) has demonstrated Kafka was very familiar, the settlement of Israel was God's will and the best that human beings could hope for was an ascent to a heavenly paradise after death, or an ecstatic ascent through the heavens while still alive. It is because of the Hasidic neutralization of Messianism, an idea which had spread across many Jewish communities in Europe, that Kafka could confidently say in "The New Attorney": "Today the gates have been shifted elsewhere and higher and farther away; nobody points out their direction."

I believe that since Kafka felt it was futile to cling to the idea of a Messiah who would come along at some future date and resurrect him from the dead, he turned, instead, to a Jewish figure from the ancient past as his source for a beneficial afterlife. In the next section of the paper I will show that Kafka, in "The New Attorney," used Enoch's ascension as the theological basis for his heavenly journey to immortality.

Kafka and Enoch

Kafka owned a book containing the legend of Enoch's ascension through the heavens, along with subsequent Jewish interpretations of that legend. The book was called *Die Religiosen Bewegungen Innerhalb Des Judentums Im Zeitalter Jesu [The Religious Practices of the Jews at About the Time of Jesus].*[6] This work was written by Moriz Friendlander and first published in 1905, so Kafka would have had ample time to read it before January 1917. That Kafka new about Enoch's ascension is confirmed by a dairy entry for June 1916, when he wrote: "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him" (*Diaries* 156). Corrouges claims the above passage shows that Kafka believed it was possible that he, like Enoch, could live out "the normal immortality of Adam—despite original sin" (107).

According to Jewish legend, because God wanted the patriarch, Enoch, to be a scribe for the angels in heaven, he instructed him in all earthly knowledge and wisdom while he was still alive. God, in turn, expected Enoch to impart his knowledge to those human beings who wished to learn from him. On the day that Enoch was to ascend to heaven, God sent a gigantic horse to carry him above. Thousands of people followed Enoch on the ride, but he urged them to go back. Most of them did, but some did not. On the seventh day of the journey, Enoch was carried even farther into the heavens by a chariot drawn by chargers. Those who refused to separate from Enoch on this journey were later found dead at the place where Enoch originally began his journey. Only Enoch was able to successfully complete the heavenly ascent (Ginzberg 1:129-130).

According to Ginzberg, rabbinic interpretations of this legend generally agree that although Enoch might have begun his journey while he was alive, eventually he "came to heaven after his death" (5:157). The rabbinic interpretations also agree that Enoch's ultimate destination was paradise. Here, some rabbinic texts state, Enoch was transformed into an angel. These rabbinic sources take Enoch's transformation to mean that learning and wisdom are an essential aspect of Judaism, and that anyone who devotes his or her life to this endeavor will be considered a pious human being. Furthermore, upon death, like Enoch and other pious individuals, a learned person could certainly be transformed into an angel (5: 156-157).

Thus, Kafka knew that if he devoted himself to a life of study within a Jewish framework, then a rewarding afterlife likely awaited him. However, Kafka also knew that if he did not live up to the high example set by Enoch, he could be cast back down to earth like the less pious individuals who followed Enoch and, thus, he would have failed in his journey to reach a heavenly paradise. I believed it is for this reason that Kafka, as Dr. Bucephalus in "The New Attorney," states that he is being observed "with the professional eye of a modest racetrack follower." Professional racetrack followers are generally gamblers who earn their living through taking risks on events that have some probability of failure associated with them.[7] Although Kafka must have been confident that a life of knowledge obtained through studying Jewish sources would allow him to reach a heavenly paradise after death, he could never be absolutely certain that his spiritual goal would be realized.

Kafka as Interpreter of Jewish Tradition

I have argued that Kafka, in the guise of Dr. Bucephalus and like the patriarch, Enoch, before him, believed that a life of piety was one dedicated to knowledge and wisdom; and that, ultimately, this type of commitment would lead to a rewarding afterlife. Scholem, commenting upon the role of the pious intellectual in Judaism, argues that not only must he study, but he also must be able to interpret Jewish tradition (*Jewish Piety* 33). I claim it is in this fuller sense of the Jewish intellectual role that we should understand the ideological immortality which Kafka refers to in his prose poem, "The New Attorney." Kafka, as Dr. Bucephalus, will study Jewish law. However, Kafka, in real life, will both study and interpret Jewish tradition. This broader role is clarified by the stories that follow "The New Advocate" in the *Landarzt [Country Doctor]* collection.[8]

Oppenheimer, commenting upon why Kafka demanded that "The New Attorney" begin the *Landarzt* collection, says that it "discretely suggests . . . the spiritual implications of the stories to come" (262). Of those remaining stories in the Landarzt collection, eleven of which were written shortly after "The New Attorney," Oppenheimer says they are evidence that Kafka considered the collection "to represent recognition of, or commitment to, his Jewish origin and tradition insofar as he could . . . scrutinize it through the medium of his art" (152).

Kafka himself confirmed the Jewish meaning of each of the thirteen stories succeeding "The New Attorney" in his *Landarzt* collection, by eventually sending them all to Martin Buber to be published in *Der Jude [The Jew]* (Memory 152). Also, he originally called this collection *Verantworung [Responsibility]*, suggesting "that behind the collection lay a sense of moral responsibility, . . . related to a Jewish sense of vocation or task" (Oppenheimer 152).

Transcending Biological Death as the Therapeutic Legacy of "The New Attorney"

In January 1917, when Kafka wrote the prose poem, "The New Attorney," he was experiencing the symptoms of what he believed was a very serious illness. In his prose

poem, Kafka symbolically expressed the idea that, similar to the patriarch, Enoch, he could obtain immortality by acquiring knowledge from the sources of Jewish tradition. By the summer of 1917, when he completed the final story in his *Landarzt* collection, he had already succeeded in offering a unique interpretation of important spiritual issues from the standpoint of Jewish tradition.[9] In August 1917, Kafka began hemorrhaging and coughing up blood; and then on September 4, 1917, he was diagnosed as having a type of tuberculosis which could prove fatal.

Upon hearing this diagnosis, Kafka was not at all alarmed and seemed to accept with great composure the fact that he was suffering from a life-threatening illness (Citati 176). Although his equanimity in the face of grave danger seemed strange to some of Kafka's acquaintances, this paper has shown that Kafka's calmness could be traced back to the ideological immortality he had first expressed in his poem, "The New Attorney."

Kafka's closest friend, Max Brod, in his biography of Kafka, has confirmed my idea that Kafka had formulated an ideological immortality at the time he was diagnosed as having tuberculosis; and that Kafka's immortality-belief was similar to the one which we find in "The New Attorney." Brod said that, by the fall of 1917, Kafka had already found something "indestructible" in himself, which meant that he had already experienced something that was absolute, permanent, and transcendent (Brod 172-173). According to Brod, his friend's "indestructible" entity was the chariot of the pious life. Of course, this kind of chariot, like Enoch's, suggests the figure of a horse being associated with the immortality-belief. Thus, we have the same kind of important relationship as was depicted in "The New Attorney," where Kafka, in the guise of the equine Dr. Becephalus, ascended, step by step, the marble staircase symbolically leading to his hereafter.

Kafka's autobiographical writings offer further evidence that he had discovered an approach to immortality which was based upon the Jewish symbolism in "The New Attorney." On January 28, 1918, approximately five months after he had completed the *Landarzt* stories and had received the unwelcome diagnosis of tuberculosis, Kafka wrote: "The apparent silence in which the days, seasons, generations, and centuries, follow upon each other is a harkening; so do the horses trot before the cart" (*Dearest Father* 89). Here, Kafka seems to be responding to the call for an eternal life and, at the same time, it appears that he is travelling towards enternity on a horse-drawn chariot, similar to Enoch's heavenly mode of transport. Oppenheimer has likewise argued that this passage by Kafka represents his strong belief in the eternal.

> The image's curious effect lies in it evocation of 'that which is to come' as something which lies 'ahead' in passing time (associated with the forward progression of the horses), and, simultaneously as something which lies 'behind' in space (associated with the chariot following them)

> . . . Having made the spiritual transition, perhaps one will encounter or be caught up in the *Jenseits* [the world to come] by what moves, in the *Diesseits* [the present world], constantly behind. (139)

Just a short time after Kafka had written the above passage, where he associated the horse-drawn chariot with an eternal life, he included in the same autobiographical notebook his view on death and the afterlife.[10] Kafka's belief on this matter was:

> Only here is suffering suffering. Not in such a way as if those who suffer here were because of this suffering to be elevated elsewhere, but in such a way that what in this world is called suffering in another world, unchanged and only liberated from its opposite, is bliss. (*Dearest Father* 46)

Certainly,in a Jungian sense this view would have to be considered "hygienic" because Kafka had been able to successfully "discover in death a goal towards which one can strive" (Jung 112).

Kafka died on June 3, 1924, at the age of forty-one (*Memory* 249). According to Max Brod, up until Kafka's death "one felt infinitely well in his company" because "the indestructible made its presence felt" (173). Also, Brod believed it was a knowledge of the "indestructible" which allowed Kafka to bear "his sufferings heroically, generally even with equanimity" (168).

The above statements by, and about, Kafka exemplify the therapeutic value that a belief in a life hereafter can offer a person who is suffering from a life-threatening illness. However, as this paper has demonstrated, in Kafka's case the therapeutic value of a rewarding afterlife must be traced back to his prose poem, "The New Attorney." In this poem, using Jewish symbolism, Kafka conveyed his ideological immortality, which later, he was able to actualize in the *Landarzt* stories through his interpretations of Jewish tradition. Thus, it is my contention that Kafka's special view on death and the afterlife, which he held till the day he died, should be seen as the therapeutic legacy of "The New Attorney."

Notes

[1]The English-language translation of "The New Attorney" was first published in 1946 by Schocken Books. It can be found in a collection of shorter works by Kafka called *Parables and Paradoxes*.

[2]Although Kafka offered "The New Attorney" to Martin Buber for publication in *Der Jude*, Buber eventually chose two other works – "Jackals and Arabs" and "A Report to an Academy" (*Memory* 152).

[3]For a summary of the numerous examples typifying Jewish beliefs in the afterlife, see Eliade (1:120-124) and Roth et al. (2:336-339).

[4]According to Oppenheimer (263), the Jewish legend of Alexander had been published in a book that

Kafka owned called *Sagen der Juden* by M.J. bin Gorion. It had also been published in the book, Der Born Judas, by M.J. bin Gorion, which Kafka might have read before January 1917.

[7] On the subject of who might not be eligible for an afterlife, according to Jewish theology, Eliade specifically states that the rabbis "believed that persons who suffered violent or otherwise untimely deaths might not be permitted to enjoy the afterlife" (1:121).

[8] The information about Enoch's ascension can be found on pages 180, 181 and 271 in the Friedlander book which Kafka owned. For a complete list of the books in Kafka's personal library, see Wagenbach (251-263).

[9] In an alternative English-language translation of "The New Attorney," the expression "racetrack follower" has been replaced by "regular punter," which, of course, means a frequent gambler. For the alternative translation, see *The Penal Colony* by Franz Kafka (135-136).

[10] The stories which follow "The New Advocate" in the *Landarzt* collection are "A Country Doctor," "Up in the Gallery," "An Old Manuscript," "Before the Law," "Jackals and Arabs," "A Visit to a Mine," "The Next Village," "An Imperial Message," "The Cares of a Family Man," "Eleven Sons," A Fratricide", "A Dream," and "A Report to an Academy" (*Letters* 135-136 and 452).

[11] Dates for the stories in the *Landarzt* collection are taken from Kafka (*Letters* 499), Flores (13-25) and Robertson (136-137).

[12] Kafka's views on death, immortality, and the therapeutic value of believing in an afterlife can be found in his fourth octavo notebook (*Dearest Father* 88-108). All the material in this notebook was written in 1918 between January 28 and February 26.

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Professor of Psychology
Adirondack Community College
State University of New York
Queensbury, New York 12804

Towards a Concept of the Poet in the Vedic Aesthetics

RANJAN GHOSH

The remarkable truth about the Indian civilisation is that it has had its beginning in poetry. The incipient stages in the establishment of the civilisation had the potent contribution of the poets. And through the ritualistic pattern the Vedic poets regulated the life of the community, and, through poetry, lent a shape to the Indian culture. It must be noted that till now hardly anything that is solemn and serious begins in India without singing a song, and, to adapt a Tennysonian phrase,[1] to our purpose, the Vedas sang the subcontinent into a nation. Just as the Greek tragedy had its origin in the religious ceremonials, in similar fashion and perhaps, more intimately, singing a song and reciting new poetical compositions were parts of the community rituals. The rituals bound the members of the community together and as such ritual was religion. Etymologically, the word religion is derived from the Latin *religere* which means to bind together. For the Vedic man rituals and poetry were close companions; each complemented the other. It may be difficult to find an example of 'pure poetry' in the *Rg Veda* since the atmosphere of ritualism pervades the poems, so much so that poetry formed an integral part of the rituals. So the social dimension of poetry cannot be confuted. The poet was socially committed. He was not lonely, idiosyncratic or aberrant as our modern poets are. He manifested a profound concern for human destiny and communication for him never posed a problem. He could engineer an admirable unification of the factors of rituals of community, poetry, and song as art forms, and philosophy that encompassed the grave subject of the origin of the world and man's relation to it. We are reminded of a remark of Pierre-Simon Ballanche: 'It is always a religious truth that the poet has to transmit. Religion and poetry are but one and the same. The poet is the priest.' (Furst 1980:78) Such a unique blend formed the quiddity of the Vedic culture. Indeed it was a large enough task that cannot be expected of a modern poet. But it must not be supposed that all the poets of the *Rg Veda* were cast in the same mould and their poetry was monolithic. Diverse philosophical thinking such as scepticism, agnosticism, pantheism have been at work behind the poet's speech. In fact the Vedic poets thrived in and were nurtured by a philosophical environment. Heraclitus, who breathed his thoughts into his fragmentary poems in the company of the argumentative Plato and Aristotle, may amaze us but a Bṛhaspati or a Dirghatamas need not have the similar impact. In the context of the *Rg Veda* there is a close relation between philosophy and poetry. For a student of culture it is a point worth noticing that a philosopher in the Vedas is a poet. The truth in man is acknowledged when it sees the light of day through the vehicle of poetic speech. So truth needs the body of poetry to express itself. The philosophy in the Vedas is not epistemology or metaphysics alone, it is the philosophy of language and a philosophy of poetry as well.

Also the *Ṛg Veda* is the glorious repository of high-quality poetry and canons of literary criticism of stupendous merit. The claim may sound tall but it is hardly so for the statement of the claim is fully substantiable. For an example we may refer to Eliot's distinction between the man who suffers and the man who creates which was anticipated thousands of years ago by the imagery of the two birds perched on the same tree; one busies itself in pecking about grains and fruits while the other simply looks on disinterestedly. ('Two birds, friends joined together clutch the same tree. One of them eats the fruit; the other looks on without eating'. I.164.20 O'Flaherty 1994:78. The metaphor of the two birds occur in the *Atharva Veda* IX.ix.20, *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* III.I.1, *Kaṭhopaniṣad*. VI.1, *Gītā* XV.1. So art, religion, literature, and philosophy formed the potent co-ordinates in the genius of India. The commingling of intellect and emotion in man is instrumental to his complete satisfaction and importantly his satisfaction is in the satisfaction of all the elements. This forms a significant sector in the domain of the Vedic poet's philosophy.

We may now turn to Dīrghatamas who was a stalwart poet and one of the profoundest philosophers of the Vedas. He has twenty-five poems to his credit in the *Ṛg Veda* collection. They are full of philosophy and abound in mysticism and symbolism. The Vedic people had the desired familiarity with the set of symbols quite unlike the modern reader who is baffled by the jumble of paradoxes and the sinuous matrix of symbols. It must be remembered that Dīrghatamas recited his poems before a gathering of learned listeners. In one of his verses, Dīrghatamas enquires about the existence of any person who has seen the creation of the world. He thus makes us confront the pregnant relation that exists between the mysterious basic universe and the evolved world of experience. It is in this knowledge that real wisdom resides and the knowledge of the basic universe is achieved through a vision. The wise poets explore their hearts and by dint of their power of intuition come to know a lot about the stages of origination. 'Poets seeking in their heart with wisdom found the bond of existence in non-existence'.(10.129.4 O'Flaherty 1994:25) Remarkably enough, it is only the power of the language of the poet that can stir the hidden universe to break forth with a meaning. If one can understand the language of the poet then he can also understand the mystery of the universe and Dīrghatamas appears to suggest that it is the poets who comprehend the mystery. (It reminds us of Novalis for whom the poet and the priest are one. 'Only an artist can divine the meaning of life.' Furst 1980:70.) Śunaḥśepha, one of the prominent Vedic poets, finds himself in bondage and embarks on a self-exploration to discover the illumination that would provide him with the clue to the mystery of the world. In fact light, wisdom, freedom, and poetry form the pith of Śunaḥśepha's philosophy. The state of 'freedom' emboldens him to behold his father and mother (wisdom and poetry). Interestingly, it is the unique 'vision' that begets wisdom, the power that enables our inner faculties to see through the apparent opacity and understand the true law of things. 'Let him who really knows proclaim here the hidden place of that beloved bird.' (1.164.7O'Flaherty 1994:76) The 'beloved bird' can come to mean truth or illumination that is concealed from the ordinary view. It is only the poet who by an 'inner height' discerns the position of the bird. So,

'unknowing, ignorant, I ask for knowledge about it from the poets who know'. (1.164.6 ibid) The omniscient intellect enables them to grasp the Truth of the universe. There is the emphasis on *yaturvidyā* and it may be observed that the poets in *Atharva Veda* use the root *vid* about two hundred and fifty times, *cit* about thirty five times and *jna* about eighty times in the sense to know and *dṛś* about eighty times in the sense to see, to observe. They have the ability to realise the forces that guide nature's operations and with this knowledge they want to control and command them. It may be mentioned in this context that Dadhyāne, a very important poet of the pre-Ṛgvedic times had the wisdom about *madhu* or honey—*Madhu-vidyā* or knowledge of the great mystery.

> Thus have I, an illumined sage, by my thoughts and utterances spoken to thee, who knowest, O Fire, O Creator, secret words of guidance, seer-wisdom that speak out their sense to the seer. (Vāmadeva's hymns, IV. 3.16 Aurobindo 1991:174)

So the seer is expected to look beyond the apparent reality and bring the 'secret' to light by the dint of his wisdom. Indeed the illumined *ṛṣi* has access to the secret words – *ninya vacāṁsi* and possesses the wisdom to utter the hidden meaning – *kavyāni kāvaye nivacana*. And Dirghatamas feels that the *ṛiks* exist in a supreme ether, imperishable and immutable in which all the gods are seated. He adds 'One who knows not That what shall he do with the Ṛk? – I.164.39 (6) The poets have spread the seven threads and they ask him to weave them into a cloth. ('An ignorant fool, I ask in my mind about the hidden footprints of the gods. Over the young calf the poets stretched out seven threads to weave.' (1.164.5) (O'Flaherty 1994:76) Here we find the seed of the postmodern critical theories where the poem, exists as a *text* and nothing else. There are two words in one of the verses of Bṛihaspati: *sirih* and *tantra*. The word *tantra* is related to *tantu*, and *tantu* means thread and the word *sirih* must be the accusative plural of *siri*. Either they spin cotton into yarn or weave clothes out of yarn. They put the words lengthwise and crosswise. The word 'text' has its origin in the art of weaving. Just as a piece of cloth has its *texture* so is the poem a text woven out of different strands of thought. It has been suggested that the seven threads given to Dirghatamas to weave were the poetry of the earlier poets. The number seven is mystical. The Vedas speak of the symbolism of seven sisters singing in chorus. There is also a reference to the weaving of the cloth in the poem of another Vedic poet Bṛihaspati. The Kavis in *Atharva Veda* fashion seven boundaries (5.1.6) being wise and deft. They may be called *Ṛṣabha* having thousand eyes. They are *tapasvins* and hence they protect Sūrya (Sun) (18.2.18)

It is worth noting that speech becomes identified with the creator and the absolute godhead – 'I am the one who blows like the wind, embracing all creatures' (10.125.8) O'Flaherty 1994:63). But speech who knows all does not move all. The love of speech is lavished on the poet – 'whom I love I make awesome; I make him a sage, a wise man, a Brahmin'(10.125.5) (ibid). Thus wisdom is bestowed which gets wedded to speech to give

birth to poetry. Wisdom is the father and language is the mother. Timidity could be the initial reaction but an aesthetic relish is what awaits the ripening of the marriage. 'The mother gave the father a share in accordance with the Order, for at the beginning she embraced him with mind and heart. Recoiling, she was pierced and flowed with the seed of the embryo. The reverent came to praise.'(1.164.8) (76) Here the seed of the embryo is the poetic composition. Again, 'The mother was harnessed to the chariot pole of the priest's cow; the embryo remained within the cowpens. The calf lowed and looked for the many coloured cow on the three stages of the journey.' (1.164.9)(ibid) The cow is the language and poetry takes its birth from the union of language and wisdom which is meant by the word calf. It may be observed that the word *vacas* (speech, spell) is used more often than *vac*. It is the speech-ability of the poet (4.4.2, 1.29.5) that has its own inherent power, having the voice of the bull and the intensity of the thunder. The *vacas* of the poet (conferred by Varuna) stubs out all poison (5.13.1), decimates the enemy (5.23.2) and most often the vices (7.78.3). By *vac* the poet slugs it out with the messengers of death and removes all *yaksma* (6.85.2).

In a poem of Bṛhaspati language is spoken of as revealing her charms like a wife wearing fine robes ('One who looked did not see speech, and another who listens does not hear it. It reveals itself to someone as a loving wife, beautifully dressed, reveals her body to her husband.' 10.71.4 O'Flaherty1994:61) This metaphor is basic to the theory of the language of poetry that was subsequently developed in India by such thinkers as Abhinavagupta (10th c. A.D.) and Ānandavardhana (9th c. A.D.). This theory would reject Mallarme's dictum that poetry is written with words and not with ideas. What Bṛihaspati says in his poem and what later on was canonised by Abhinavagupta is the view that meaning is incarnate in the language of poetry. Language is the body while meaning is the soul. Neither of these can be dissociated from the other. This view has found its paradigmatic expression in the opening verse of Kalidasa's *Raghuvaṁśa* (1.1)

> Interwelded as words and meaning
> Pārvati and the Lord of the Lords (Brough 1968:51)

As a matter of fact, Bṛhaspati has strongly rooted for the phenomenon of poetry being the offspring of language and wisdom. The world of forms bear reference to the language and in the process of becoming poetry, language with its innate malleability, assumes diverse forms in relation to the various objects in the world. So what distinguishes the ordinary language from the language of poetry requires a careful introspection.

There is one absolute language, *vāk*, and on no account can the poet's language be cut off from it. In the case of ordinary language the meaning is conventional or stratified or used as a result of semantic habit. In case of poetry, language crosses the frontiers of conventional meaning and reaches out to the transcendent source of meaning. The thoughts of the poet cannot be communicated through propositional statements and the obliquity of poetry contributes to its aesthetic profundity. Poetry transcends the fixed contours of a

linguistic construction and its meaning illuminates in a flash by meaningful sentence-units in Bhartṛhari's philosophy of Sanskrit grammar. This brings to the fore the doctrine of suggestion (*dhvani*). (*Dhvani* is the principle which is derived by Anandavardhana. Every analysable linguistic element in poetry is *vyañjaka* or revealer in regard to *rasa* which must be regarded *ipso facto* as *vyaṅgya* or 'revealed' par excellence. [It is the poet who comprehends the aesthetic suggestivity and can fathom the multi- layered symbolism to infuse the intended *rasa*. Also Kuntaka's *Vakroktijivita* should not go unmentioned. *Vakrokti* is an unusual statement, more elevated, ornamented and appealing than our ordinary language which is fit enough to make its presence felt in the domain of poetry. Nilakantha Dikshita calls it *Vinyasa Visesha* in *Siva Lilarnava*. Ruyyaka uses the term *Praudhokti* in *Alamkara Sarvasva*.] Indeed the Vedic poet sees through the ordinary usage and gets the suggested meaning (*vyañjanā*) incarnate in the language. It is owing to this power that the poet enjoys a special position in the Vedic sociology.

I Ching makes us aware of the 'right'-man who takes up the words, ponders their meaning under the fixed rules that reveal themselves. It is to the right man that the meaning manifests itself. Here the 'right' man could be the poet or the man with the vision of truth and wisdom.

> He is the one who knows how to stretch the thread and weave the cloth; he will speak the right words. He who understands this is the guardian of immortality; (6.9.3) (O'Flaherty 1994:116)

Thus it is only the 'inspired' poets who know how to harness the plough and stretch the yokes on either side (to fashion the composition with deftness and delicacy). By this they win favour among gods. Moreover. Dīrghatamas draws a distinction between those who have eyes to see (endowed with wisdom) and those who are blind (people who understand nothing). Precisely, the real sight is the sight of the poet. It is further maintained that those who possess wisdom attain immortality. It appears from Dīrghatamas' manner of speaking that wisdom consists in expressing the truth in appropriate metres. Also it is essential to remain cognisant about the proper occasion for the different metres. The concept of metre is so important an affair that the holiest of truths is taken to be expressed in *Gāyatrī* metre. Poetry has different metres and one should know what metre is to be resorted to for a particular song.

> With the *Gāyatrī* foot they fashion a hymn; with the hymn, a chant; with the Triṣṭubh foot a strophe; with the strophe of two feet or four feet they fashion a speech. With the syllable they fashion the seven tones. (1.164.24) (O'Flaherty 1994:78)

Even the Atharvanic hymns are bound by metres. *Arka* (a song) is measured by Gāyatrī metre and in fact the *ṛks* have similar metre and from these *ṛks* the *sāmans* are

fashioned. The poets sing *arka* (*arkam abhyarcanti*, 13.1.13) The true poet knows what poetry is and by knowing the truth turns immortal. The question as regards the relation between the true poet and immortality remains. The question would surface since 'wisdom' has become a suspect word in today's atmosphere. Eliot has been hesitant in admitting that Goethe is a great poet though he admits that Goethe is a sage. This Eliotian hesitation is symptomatic of the hour of disbelief. But for the Vedic man nothing is less than the loss of wisdom. Here, wisdom cannot be a mere intellectual equipment. In fact poetic language becomes the glorious medium for 'truth' to express itself and is the sole manner by which immortality is achieved. This is the Vedic philosophy which Dīrghatamas represents where to be a poet is the highest goal and with poethood comes bliss and immutability. Also the Angirases are said to have discovered 'light'. By being associated with the exploits of Indra in the release of the cows after killing Vala, the Angirases have released 'light'. In fact Yama who found the Path achieved wisdom in the company of the Angirasas. Their 'light', Yama's Path and Manu's system of moral life leave its synergistic impact on the unification of civilisation.

Here we may make an effort to understand the reasons that make a true poet know what metre will suit a particular kind of poetry. Dīrghatamas gives a description of the metres and their application. He says that the Gāyatrī metre is related to the three worlds and is not confined to any region and for this reason it has a greatness of its own. Dīrghatamas highlights the contrast between the condition of the poet and the condition of the common man. In the poet there is something that is externally seen and at the same time there is something which resides inside him. It is the truth about him. What is external is what is in him common with the ordinary man. Quite unlike the common man there is something in the poet that runs briskly; it is his talent. The mind of the poet is compared with a fast-paced steed and the immortal spirit in the poet moves about with his own will power. Thus the poet combines two factors, the mortal and the immortal, and both form an integral part of his personality. Dīrghatamas suggests that on becoming a poet he is blessed with a new parentage; he becomes the son of the heaven as father and of the earth as mother. With poetry appearing as the supreme expanse of the world, he settles confidently at the altar and proudly faces the abode of language. The rituals of which his poetic self is a vital ingredient reveal the world-force and the world activity. This is a pointer to aesthetic comprehensiveness in the Atharvanic poet. For him there is *varcas* (splendour) that takes into account the aesthetic charms of the earth – *gandha*, odour of the world (*Prithivī*) and *ruchi*, charm with its subtlety and refinement and the *ugra*, the warty or vulgar – in the same sweep. This is peculiarly the all comprehensive and the all encompassive self of the poet.

So Kavi is the man with *prajnāvat* or *dhyānavat*, *medhā*, and *manīṣā*. He is the *krāntadarśin* (loosely translated as transvisionary) as suggested in *Atharva Veda* 19.53.1 possessed of *prajnā* (understanding). Here *dhīra* (wisdom) is related to *medhā* (intellect). This *medhā* is closely allied with *tapas*, *indriya* (the power of senses, 6.133.4), *śraddhā* and

dikṣā (19.64.1; 19.40.3). The *medhā* in the kavi orders the thought process and regulates the flow of ideas, imparting the requisite artistic finality. In the true poet, *medhā* flows unabated and the mind is without *chidra* (here it means the breach in comprehension or ideation). The poet is, thus, the *medhāvin* or *sumedhas*. Further Dīrghatamas is struck by amazement at the metamorphosed state in which he finds himself.

> 'I do not know just what it is that I am like. I wander about concealed and wrapped in thought. When the first born of Order came to me , I won a share of this Speech.'(1.164.37) (O'Flaherty 1994:79)

The discrepancy between the old and the new selves is quite conspicuous and Dīrghatamas as a poet shrugs off his old self but cannot explain the dynamics of this transformation. Indeed the split in the poet's personality is multi-directional. It is to the ultimate truths of the world that the personality of the poet is directed. This runs counter to the personality of the ordinary man that gravitates towards the prosaic order of the extraneous world – the world that is too much with us, getting and spending. Here the double personality in Dīrghatamas is a case in point. He uses both the singular and the dual number while speaking of himself.

Very clearly, the *ṛks* or the syllables of poetry are the supreme abode of language. The Atharvanic poet acts as the *purohita* (priest) of the kings as he wrestles against the messengers of Yama who have come to take away the life of a person, declaring himself as *brahmacārin* of *Mṛtyu*. In contrast to the ordinary language that relates itself to the objects of this experienced world, the language of poetry establishes itself as the real language where the gods can find their refulgent mansion – ' the undying syllable of the song is the final abode where all the gods have taken their seat'.(1.164.39)(O'Flaherty 1994:80) What follows from it is the importance of understanding the syllables – an understanding that sustains the relation between language of poetry and the presence of god therein. Also, what finds a durable niche is the fact that through the understanding of poetry man can achieve a communion with the gods. It must be mentioned that the poet with the gift of imagination (*pratibhā*) shares an aesthetic sensibility with the ideal critic (*sahṛdaya* or *rasika*). Importantly, in Dīrghatamas the critic who understands the essence of poetry, and the creator called poet, lose all distinctions.

Dīrghatamas juxtaposes two concepts *kṣara* and *akṣara*. The word *kṣara* means what sheds down and the word *akṣara* means what cannot be shed or what is indestructible. The implication of the contrast is what obtains between the empirical and the transcendent or between that what is conditioned and that what is unconditioned. The world beyond can only be spoken of by language. The world of experience is rooted in or allied with the transcendent. When Wordsworth (in his poem "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey") speaks of the unknown modes of being he was thinking what had already been thought by Dīrghatamas so long back.

'Speech was divided into four parts that the inspired priests know. Three parts, hidden in deep secret, humans do not stir into action; the fourth part of speech is what men speak.' (1.164.45) (O'Flaherty 1994:80)

So it is the poet who with the benison of imagination (*kavi pratibhā*) has free access to all the four quarters. He wields language in such a way that 'the unknown modes of being' are made known. (One can profitably refer to the *Agni Purāṇa* which maintains that words attain preeminence in science [*śāstra*], meaning in epic history [*Itihāsa*] and suggestion in poetry. In *Dhvani Kāvya* [*Dhvanyāloka*,I.13] we find that the apparent meaning delightfully eases into another territory of meaning and manifests that [other suggested] sense.

One of Dīrghatamas' major poems is addressed to his Muse, the river goddess Sarasvatī.(It may be noted that there is only one Muse in Indian theory of poetry as distinguished from the nine Muses of the Greeks). The word Sarasvatī denoted a river and connoted a goddess. The river is spoken of in the Vedas as the greatest of the rivers and also as the greatest of the mothers: *nadītame, ambitame*. Sarasvatī as a goddess is the apotheosis of a river held in high esteem by the Vedic people. As a goddess she incarnates the sacred divine knowledge, *Brahmavidyā-svarūpiṇī*. She is the fountainhead of all faculties (mental and spiritual), the purifier and bestower of pure reason, the recompenser of worship and is the source of inspiration and accomplishment for all our benevolent acts. She sets in motion all the energies of the soul and intellect. She imparts deep knowledge to all who are seekers of truth. It was in the valley of the river Sarasvatī that the Aryan civilisation had originated and flourished in India. In the poem the poet is the child of Sarasvatī. She is thought of as a mother who nurses the poet on her breasts: 'Your inexhaustible-breast, Sarasvati that flows with the food of life, that you use to nourish all that one could wish for, freely giving treasure and wealth and beautiful gifts – bring that here for us to suck'.(1.164.49) (O'Flaherty 1994:81) It is implied that what a poet can give to a man is what a mother gives to a baby. But the difference is important for us to note. The milk available in the mother's breasts is only for a particular period of time; but the milk from Sarasvatī's breasts is everlasting. It keeps on nourishing the poet unconditionally.

One has to admit that the mysticism, symbolism, and the enigma of the poem baffle the modern reader with a near impenetrable density. But what cannot be disclaimed is the fact that the poem is a work of high quality dappled with exquisite images evincing a deft handling of language. It is crowned by a laudable artistic unity achieved through a remarkable commingling of contrasts.

The line of argument cannot be strengthened without an adequate discussion of Brihaspati (also known by the appellation of Brahmanaspati meaning lord of poetry). He is also called *pathikrt*, 'path-preparer' (the *Kavīnām Kavih*). He was a 'creation and at the same time a personification of the priestly activity, to which later priestly poets ascribed the

deeds of might for which formerly other gods, notably Indra, were praised. He is the harbinger of joy for the gods and men and through his wisdom one can obtain a share in the sacrifice. He is the Pontifex, the preparer of the way to the heights of heaven. There is a mention of poetry as a very prominent feature in him. Symbolically it is said that he has seven mouths and is endowed with seven songs. Although in the *Atharva Veda*, the poet can be the divine kavi where Agni (5.12.1; 8.3.20; 19.4.6), Bhūmi (12.1.63), Vena (5.1.6) Varuna (5.13.1), Sāvitrī (7.14.1) Rohita (13.1.11) are omniscient and possessed with extraordinary abilities. Their skill is in the creation of the universe – *devasya kāvyam* – separately categorised from their human counterpart. It can be convincingly argued that Bṛhaspati is essentially a man who was deified on account of his superior talents and achievements. Here one may note that deification of poets is a matter well known to aestheticians. If we go back in history we shall find that the poet and the priest were united originally in the same person, which means that the poet was he who was conscious of the world of spirit as well as that of sense, and was the ambassador of the gods to men. This was his highest function and this is the reason for giving him the name of 'seer'. Thus Bṛhaspati combines the dual identity of a god and a singer (divine singer). As a matter of fact in the *Ṛg Veda* (X 91.3) God is depicted as a poet.

> Most skilful with Thy powers, most wise with wisdom,
>
> O God, Thou art a Poet knowing all with thy poetic wisdom.
>
> Master of good things, Thou, the One, art the Lord
>
> Of what the heaven and the earth produce. (Bose 1960:119)

We should also note that the concept of the poet as a divine singer is a happy person. The 'happiness' of the poet is related to 'immortality' – a state devoid of existential anguish or ennui. And this happiness emerges out of a deliverance from the murky quarters of ignorance, and immortality is conjoined to the attainment of wisdom. Atharvan, as the preeminent poet in *Atharva Veda* has a direct correspondence with Varuṇa who bestowed a speckled cow to him. This is *kavitā-śakti*, the poetic inspiration. When Atharvan was asked what made him the poet, he responded confidently saying that his omniscience made him know everything that is created. *Kāvya* (poetry) has made him profound in intelligence and seems to suggest that the *go* (cow) presented to him is nothing but the *kavitvā-śakti*. So poethood is a spiritual achievement. Interestingly Yama, who in the later mythologies became the lord of Death, is described in the *Ṛg Veda* as the pathfinder to immortality. Indeed the discovery of the Path has come in the company of the poets. The journey to illumination cannot be completed in the sole capacity of a powerful rex but by being a part of the community of the poets. Also, being endeared to poetry, the destination may be reached.

When a formidable ruler like Yama lovingly seeks the realm of poetry and song, finds illumination in the camaraderie of poets, and associates himself with the valiant exploits of Indra, the question of effeminacy of the Vedic poets is easily ruled out. Rather a unique combination of power and wisdom emerges. The heroism suggested here cannot border on barbarism but has beauty about it for the Vedic civilisation demands an extraordinary intrepidity to break through the frontiers of darkness and evil to savour a triumph which flowers into poetry. So for the harmony and security of a civilisation, the dual functions of wisdom and power assume mammoth significance.

When language enters into a true poet it transforms itself into true poetry called *mantra* or a *brahman*. Poetry in *Atharva Veda* is referred to as *Manīṣā, Śaṁsa Mati* (prayer) or *Gāthā* and *Gīr* (song). It is the *Ukthā* (song) to which Agni responds and *Stotra* (song of praise) for which Varuṇa blessed Atharvan. Indra comes to the poet owing to his *dhī*(prayer) as also the Aśvins render assistance to him. Language in the wondrous hands of the poet assumes an unusual and deviant form as the poet loses his status of a mere composer and escalates to the pedestal of a seer of *mantra* and is a *brahmaṇa* as well. The beauty inherent in the language of poetry requires the genius of a poet to manifest itself. In Agni's fashioning of the hymns of Aṅgiras we find the word *klp* that suggests an artistic design in poetry. Here one may mention the forging of the joints of the chariot by Rbhus who use their physical adroitness to join the parts of the chariot much in the same way the kavi fashions out the *Kāvya Śarīra*. Like the ploughman who levels the deep furrows and dishevelled earth, the kavi smoothens the rough edges of language and with choice of words, selection and arrangement (*electio, indicium, dispositio*) beautifies the whole *Kavi-vākya*.

> Inspired with poetry I have fashioned this hymn of praise for you whose very nature is power, as the skilled artist fashions a chariot. (*Rg Veda* 5.2.11) (O'Flaherty 1994:103)

In Sanskrit poetics, Dandin uses the term *Atisayokti*, the term and concept being derived from Bhāmaha. *Atiśaya* or *Adbhuta* is wonder and he refers to the wonderful 'transmutation' by which language blooms into poetry when handled by the creative genius of the poet. It is only the poet who can put his fingers on the inner tissues of language and mine the hidden wealth. Language can be a burden for those to whom the innate beauty remains hidden. Bṛhaspati believes that the person who has realised the true beauty of poetic language and has successfully ferreted beauty out is well protected. So a true poet or ṛshi can consider himself secure for poetry has endowed him with the power and strength to ward off all perils and stub out all evils. The difference in the matter of inner wealth is what finds an implicit elucidation in the difference between the lakes. One of the lakes have water rising only up to the chest while the other can have sufficient water for a complete bath. Water exists in all; but the difference is in depth. Some pry into the inner resources of

language but cannot exhaust the limits of it; the true poet comprehends the meaning in totality and surfaces with the entire chest of beauty. Also, the difference lies in the 'mobility' of the mind. Added to that is the insight into the truth and an outstanding intellectual ability that combines religion, philosophy, science, and art. This catapults the poet to the elevated station of a leader of a nation.

In fact presentation of good poetry is accompanied by some music and good poetry recited in an assembly adds to the development of art. In this regard beauty and rhythm can be aligned for it is through the rhythmic corridors of language that beauty can come to the fore. Bṛhaspati says that we sing about the origin of the gods in the form of a poem. This is a very significant statement. Sri Aurobindo could be said to have been looking back to Bṛhaspati's declaration when he christens Book I of his *Savitri* as the Book of Beginnings: 'It was the hour before the Gods awake'.(Aurobindo1996:1) Bṛhaspati then blows out the birth of the gods. This act of blowing out the birth of the gods is imaged by a simile: a smith blows the wind through the bellow. Poetic creation is suggested to be creating *de novo* , making there arise what is from what was not. The simile is significant for the fact that Bṛhaspati is not prepared to make any distinction between craft and the fine art. This should remind one of Michelangelo who also did not make such distinction. Also one should not forget the simile of leaving. Indeed the distinction has gained currency since Kant's *Critique of Judgement* and is celebrated by Hegel in his *Lectures on Fine Arts*. We may further consider the simile and march into some interesting areas. Bṛhaspati as a poet, is taking up the philosophical concepts of Being and Non-Being. If Being comes out of Non-Being by the miracle of the poet's creation then it must be rationally incomprehensible. The alleged rational incomprehensibility is the miracle of creation. The wind does not appear to be there before the smith's blowing; it comes into being when the smith blows his bellows. The gods who did not appear to be in existence are brought into being by the power of Bṛhaspati. He is the great poet singing about the truths of the world. This brings light to humanity which was concealed under the cloud of ignorance. Shall we not take Bṛhaspati as suggesting further that in bringing the gods into existence, by singing about them, he is creating himself as well? Poetry creates the poet along with the beings he sang about.

The poet then is the creature who is free; no causal explanation can tell why someone is a poet. His freedom may be an enigma but it is nonetheless a fact. His wisdom or illumination comes from within; the poet evolves from within. The inward vision, which Patañjali enunciates, finds a perpetual flow of pure consciousness that incarnate sound and meaning. It is the poet who knows the secret of speech and thus visualises *Brahman*, the ultimate reality. This brahman is the highest principle, the inner protection and the poet speaks of it with power and unites with its magical potency. This inwardness of the mystery of language convinced Bhartṛhari (in *Vākya Padīya*) to seek the final junction of beatitude. It is with the transformation of language that the world begins to evolve. The doctrine of

śabda Brahman or language as Brahman goes back to the system of thought represented by a poem of Bṛhaspati in the *Ṛg Veda*. Throughout the Vedic literature the word *brāhmaṇa* in the neuter gender means the poetry of the Vedas and in the masculine it means the poet. It is only in the Upanishad of the later times that the word came to denote the highest truth or Reality or the Absolute. The other synonyms of the English word poet that occur in the *Ṛg Veda* besides *brāhmaṇa*, are *Kavi* and *Vipra*.(also *Kāru, Jaritṛ, Gṛṇat, Stuvat, Gāyat*, and *Stotṛ* in the *Atharva Veda*) All these words have mystico-cognitive connotations.

Historical imagination is Janus faced. It looks back and it also looks up to the future. As-yet and the not-yet are both encompassed by the imagination. As a matter of fact, in dealing with the Vedas we have to take recourse to reconstruction or hermeneutics. Here the attempt has been made to ideate the concept of the poet in the *Ṛg Veda* from a two fold source. First, the profound poetic quality of most of the *ṛks* cannot be doubted. The *Nāsadīya Sūkta* may be linguistically simple but is conceptually provocative. Despite the mosaic of answerable questions, perplexing challenges and paradoxes, the whirligig of time has failed to attenuate a fraction of the beauty of the creation hymn. Max Muller in quoting this sūkta in *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* appropriately comments that language blushes at itself in this composition. The beauty of Uṣā is not Time's fool; it is unimpeachable. The myth of the Urbaśī and her fugitive charm have found handsome adoration in Kalidasa. It is interesting to note that as Dirghatamas, Bṛhaspati, Śunahśepha, Kaṇva, Kutsa, Uṣana, Atri, Bhṛgu, Rbhus, Atharvaṇ, Aṅgiras, Bharadvāja are poets so also Agni, Indra and Varuṇa are honoured as poets. This interchange of the person of the poet and god is a pointer to the basic truth about poetry – the truth about the divine quality of poetic speech. Indeed many a time the poets have announced themselves: *aham kavin Uśanā pasyatauma* (*Ṛg Veda*, 4.26.1) – I am the poet Uṣanā, behold me. (*Kavīnām Uṣanā Kavih*: the *Gītā* 10.37 looks back to the Vedas)

Secondly, we have seen poetry as inextricably welded with divinity and language has been apotheosised (*Vāgdevī*, the goddess of speech). The Vedic people looked at nature as the poetry of gods – *devasyakāvyam* which does not undergo mutation – *namamara na jirjati*. That the poet can accompany the gods is a thing that has been surfacing itself in the cultural history of India and elsewhere in the world.

In banishing all evil spirits to a dark hole the poet in the *Ṛg Veda* seizes the opportunity to heap evil on the head of the rival priest, a 'sorcerer' (7.104). (Similar reference exists in the *Atharva Veda* where the evil spirits run away at the sight of the Atharvanic poet.) The poet's special gift to create or his role of being a transvisionary with a creative insight may be misinterpreted by being compared to the awesome wielding of the magician's wand. But his special faculty cannot be connived and his luminous status is thoroughly established. Only the poet with his extraordinary ability has access to that 'sweet fruit' and perceives the 'beloved bird'.

'The birds that eat honey nest and brood on that tree on whose tip, they say, is the sweet fruit. No one who does not know the father eats that.'(1.164.22) (O''Flaherty 1994:78)

Here the father is the wisdom. It may be mentioned that the corresponding faculties for Truth-consciousness are *dṛṣṭi, śruti, viveka*, the direct vision of truth, the direct hearing of its word, the direct discrimination of the right. Whosoever is in possession of this Truth-consciousness or open to the action of these faculties is the ṛṣi or Kavi, sage or seer. So the riddle of sacrifice (*Asya Vamasya*), a long and complex hymn whose meaning remains primarily hidden in labyrinthine symbolism, is only known to the poet. He knows the answers to the questions that are asked in the hymn. He commands a power that transcends all limit and privacy. A true poet is said to be a ṛsi or *voyant* as Rimbaud wanted to become.

Je dis qu'il faut etre voyant, se faire voyant
I say that one must be a seer, make oneself a seer. (Bernard 1962:10)

With a mind pouring the light, the rishi can see the inner experience and Dirghatamas is proud to belong to that category. Incidentally he was born blind. His name means 'one in long darkness'. This darkness can refer to the umbra of ignorance or the lack of wisdom or the want of insight into the mysteries of the universe. Dirghatamas, like the philosopher in Plato's *Republic*, emerges from the cave and looks up at the sun, the source of light. He reminds us of the celebrated prayer in the Upanishad to lead the blind from darkness to light, from death to immortality. With *Darsana* (vision), *Varṇana* (the power of objectification) and *Pratibha* (the creative genius), the poet is the person to whom the prayer is granted.

The poet's fashioned seven boundaries: he who was trapped went to only one of them. The pillar of life's vigour, he stands in the nest of the Highest, among the supports at the end of the paths. (*Rg Veda* 10.5.6) (O'Flaherty 1994:118)

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Department of English
Visva Bharati University
Shanti Niketan
West Bengal

"East and West" and the Concept of Literature[1]

WOLFGANG RUTTKOWSKI

Summary:

By carefully comparing observations made by specialists in Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Western literature concerning problems of literary values, canon-formation, and the concept of literature itself, the author tries to answer some of the most pertinent questions in comparative aesthetics and ethnopoetics, specifically:

Are literatures of radically different cultures comparable regarding **literary values**?- Do "universal" literary values exist?- Do literary values remain the same within the development of *one* culture?- Does the fact that certain works of literature have been valued over centuries indicate that "eternal values" exist?-

Is the **concept of literature** the same in radically different cultures?- Does it remain the same within the development of *one* culture?- Are the basic genres (the lyric, epic, and dramatic) comparable?- Are certain analogous phenomena in Indian and Western literature indicative of basic similarities between these literatures?-

Is at least the **theory** deduced from these literatures similar?- Is a unified theory of literature desirable?- Are literary **canons** established mainly according to perceived aesthetic values in the selected works?-

If the answer to all of the questions above is NO, wherein lie the basic differences between Eastern and Western literatures?-

I

In a review of literature on the topic[2], Anthony C. Yu alerted us to recent attempts at applying Western critical vocabulary to Chinese literature. He defended this method. This makes us aware of **two possible perspectives for evaluating literature**, i.e., our present (mostly Western) one and a historical reconstruction of ways of viewing works that do not seem to fit our criteria.

We cannot take it for granted that such a "historically adequate" approach is at all possible for "comparative aesthetics" (Eliot Deutsch) or "ethnopoetics" (Tim Ingold). But even if it were, it would not enable us to explain *why* certain works of literature have been selected and passed on as exemplary, and others not. In some isolated cases, this central problem of canon-formation might be answered *historically*, if we know enough about the genesis and social surroundings of such works. But we will never be able to explain such choices and traditions with *aesthetic* criteria[3], simply because in most cases the process of selection and tradition was not made according to such criteria[4].

Most critics silently assume that all so called "masterworks" of literature in various cultures and periods have been selected based on more or less the same set of esthetical standards which are merely obscured by all kinds of circumstantial ("cultural") ballast. Once freed of the latter, their "eternal and universal values" will shine in beautiful self-evidence. - The comparatist experience should teach us precisely the opposite: Firstly, that "masterworks" have not been selected mainly according to esthetic standards, and secondly, that such standards are in any case not the same for sufficiently remote cultures. They even vary *within* such cultures.

What do we mean by "sufficiently remote" cultures? We mean precisely those cultures that had *not yet* reached the stage of mutual interaction, exchange, and influence that was meant by Goethe when he coined in 1827 his concept of "World Literature"[5]. As Horst Steinmetz has correctly established, Goethe "meant predominantly European literature" with his concept, not a list of "great books," comprising Arab, Chinese, Indian, Japanese or Persian ones, as would be taught nowadays at an American college. "World literature is, as a product of economical, historical, and intellectual development, primarily to be defined as a literature which transgresses and wants to transgress national and linguistic barriers from the outset. However, it does not do that because it excels in special literary or other qualities but rather primarily because it reacts to situations in life which increasingly resemble each other, in spite of differing national environments, especially in the so-called capitalist countries."[6]

We might just as well say: "sufficiently remote" cultures are those before (or outside) the Western domination in the colonial period. Certainly, there were also other kinds of "cultural colonialism" besides the Western one, e.g., that of the Arab culture in Mogul India and of the Chinese in all of its "satellite states."- But we are accustomed to distinguishing these "cultural spheres" as a whole, while we are not always aware of the far reach of our own cultural influence. Therefore, we tend to "universalize" our own cultural values.

To complicate matters, we also have to be careful about which *stages of development* of various cultures we compare. It seems to make sense to only compare literatures of a comparable period. But who is to decide which periods are roughly comparable? When Germany, after the confessional wars, made a first attempt at developing a kind of "national literature," the Indian "classicism" was long over. When in China the four great lyric poets of the T'ang period wrote their masterworks, the tribes of the Germanic migrations were merely dreaming of unifying into a united "Reich." Already in the 7th century, the library of the Chinese emperor contained 370 000 scrolls, while two centuries later, in the 9th century, one of the largest collections of the Occident, belonging to the monastery of St Gallen, could only boast of four hundred volumes.

II

It is not only the quality of esthetical standards that varies widely in different cultures, and within these cultures in various stages of development of these cultures, it is **the concept of literature** itself, which has to be examined comparatively. We have to ask: What makes (or since when is) literature "literature" in our sense of the concept? The same critics that assume a universal validity of aesthetic standards in all cultures usually also assume that the concept of "literature" means more or less the same wherever we look.

However, Wolfhart Heinrichs[1] points to the "surprising fact that in classical Arabic there is no comparable concept to 'literature'" and that "while the concept 'literature' in a Western context immediately evokes the popular

trinity of epic, lyrical, dramatic, its application to the Arabic high literature yields two deficits (epic and drama), which leaves the third category not particularly effective."

Not only do variants in its sub-groups cause the concept "literature" to fluctuate, so also do the different meanings it receives from its social embedding. There are various stages of the latter to be observed which Rudolf Arnheim describes well: "In early societies, performers and art makers are so closely integrated in the community that their motivational objectives coincide with those of the group. At first, there may be no distinction between those who supply the arts and those who consume them. Performances of dances and other ceremonies are shared by all for a common purpose, and craft work is contributed by everyone. Even when the arts become specialities reserved for certain individuals, there is in early societies no noticeable distinction between the objectives of the artists and those of the community. Only in ages of individualism such as that of the Renaissance in the Western world do artists cease to be employed artisans like bricklayers or shoemakers and develop their own aesthetic values , which must try to cope with those of monarchal and ecclesiastical princes using their services. In the nineteenth century, the artist, detached from the give-and-take of well-functioning social relations, is typified by isolated loners pursuing their own standard and taste, which more often than not are not shared by the public."- The situation first described might have been part of the fascination that, for example, the island of Bali exerted on anthropologists and especially artists.

While Arnheim writes about art in general, Terry Eagleton[8] concentrates on literature only, and at the same time tackles the question of whether aesthetic values are "universal" or "culturally relative." He recommends dropping once and for all the idea of "literature" as an eternal and immutable category. Anything can be literature and everything that is now seen as indisputably literature might one day not be so any longer. The reason lies in the changeability of value judgements, meaning that the so-called 'literary canon' has to be recognized as a construct, which has been built by certain people in a certain time for certain reasons. According to him, a literary work or tradition which is valuable in itself independently of

what anyone has said or will say about it does not exist. 'Value' is a transitive concept: it always means what certain people in specific situations according to certain criteria and in light of certain intentions value highly. The fact that we interpret certain works always to a degree in the light of our own interests - we can, in fact, do nothing else - could be one of the reasons why certain works kept their value over the centuries. It may be that our appreciation does not relate to the 'same' work, even though we may think so. 'Our' Homer is neither identical with the Homer of the middle ages, nor is 'our' Shakespeare the one of his contemporaries; various historical periods have constructed a different Homer and Shakespeare for their own purposes and found in their texts elements of various value, even though these texts were not necessarily the same.-

This last view is not entirely new. It expresses what Goethe called the "incommensurable" of great poetry. It enables different readers of different times to read different things "out of" (or "into") great works. According to Ingarden, each individual reader has to (re)create the "*aesthetic* object" by "filling in" the "points of indeterminacy" in the "*artistic* object." Homer's *Iliad* (the art object) is not the same as our experience of it (the aesthetic object). Our value judgements can only be focused on *aesthetic* objects (our experience of works) and not on artistic objects. The former change, together with our tastes and with our cultural sensibilities and expectations.

Arnheim and Eagleton are not the only ones who have shown us that different periods within the European cultural sphere completely differed in their artistic ideas and ideals. Karl Aschenbrenner maintains the same opinion, mainly in respect to music, but it can easily be transferred to literature. He regrets that in "our ecumenical age" everyone tries to appreciate everything, and asks whether this "esthetical use" of many things does not inevitably lead to their misuse. He suggests that we should rethink whether our devotion to pure art celebrated since the Renaissance is the only way we can satisfy our "aesthetic instincts." According to him, we do not have to wait for Marxists to ask ourselves whether the only flag under which art should sail is *L'art pour l'art.*

Similarly Ulrich Weisstein: "Whether literature is art in the narrow sense of the word may remain unanswered. In late antiquity, as well as in the Middle Ages, it was certainly not an independent, free art, but rather remained tied to the 'artes' of the trivium (the basic academic disciplines) of grammar, dialectics and rhetorics."

Rosario Assunto begins his book on *The Theory of Beauty in the Middle Ages* with the question of whether one can speak of a medieval aesthetics at all: "Talking about medieval *aesthetics* we commit an error in using this concept in the strict sense of the word. Medieval thinking does not know yet the combination of the concepts of perception, art, and beauty on which we base the terminus *aesthetics* since Baumgarten. And even less the idea of art as a subjective human creation What we now call a work of art was for the Middle Ages a thing created for a useful purpose. It did not represent a category of its own merit, qualitatively differing from dresses, tools or weapons (15ff) The *moral meaning* of a work of art roughly corresponds to what we would call now its *promotional* appeal. Its *allegorical* character by which it becomes a metaphor we would call its *didactical* nature. The difference to our present concept lies in the fact that we consider it to be a deficiency if a work of art is promotional or didactical. At least we pass these qualities in silence when we evaluate a work of art. In the Middle Ages, it was just the opposite."[21]

Assunto also indicates that the medieval thinkers principally differentiated between the concepts of the *Beautiful* and *Art*, quite in contrast to the Renaissance. - By recommending again a strict differentiation between these two concepts (see my articles, 1990.1998, and 2000), we only return to the old and proven.

Finally, we should ask ourselves, in accord with the comparatist Jean Weisgerber, "not only whether a unified theory of literature is possible but also whether it is to be wished for. Are universal categories relevant and accurate enough to describe particulars? Theories may be so abstract as to loose all contact with empirical reality, 'over-abstraction' is sometimes of no avail."

III

Still, and this is the amazing and seemingly contradictory observation we cannot deny, we *do* find in the older Eastern cultures many **analogous tendencies** to some of ours - that is, if we look long enough[9].- We read, for example, with surprise about a Chinese scholar-writer in the 16th century[10] who (like Herder and young Goethe in Western settings) collected folk songs and even valued them more highly than the artful poems of his colleagues because of their simplicity of language and sincerity of emotions. This, however, was the exception to the rule, as we shall see later

In Indian aesthetics, W. Chaudhury has gone farthest in equating Indian with Western criteria of "poeticity." He compared (1956) the theory of *rasa* (to be translated as "moods") which was firstlaid out by the mythic Brahman sage Bharata before the 3rd century with Aristotle's concept of *catharsis* in regards to their psychological effect on the viewer. Later, he tried to demonstrate that Kant's category of *disinterested pleasure* [11] as well as his definition of *taste* were not new. It is especially interesting for us that Bharata advocated the opinion that all psychological formation has to be subordinated to one main emotional impact, a view that was held by Aristotle for the tragedy.

Even the "autonomous" mode of existence of poetry is hinted at when in rasa-theory two kinds of emotions are differentiated, private ones (related to the poet's life) and general or fictitious ones, which are supposed to be the true material of poetry.-

Also the theory of *empathy*, as worked out by Theodor Lipps and Volkelt, had its precursors and in India was partially explained with the *deja-vu phenomenon* stemming from prior incarnations. Even for Lukacs's understanding of the *typical* and the *exemplary* there are analogies in early Indian theory.

The function of Ingarden's *spots of indeterminacy (Unbestimmtheitsstellen)* were anticipated when the evocative character of good poetry was stressed again and again. The soul of good poetry is supposed to be the unspoken. An interesting anticipation of our "thoroughly modern" *poetics of deviation (Abweichungspoetik)* can be found already around 600 AD in the thoughts of Bhamaha.- The concept of beauty as defined by the

last great theoretician of poetics, Jagannatha (17th century), is again strangely similar to that of Kant.

We have to keep in mind, however, that most of the above mentioned criteria are not evaluative ones. They apply to "kitsch" just as well as to "high literature." They do not help us much for establishing generally valid criteria for evaluating literature. It is the weighting or relative dominance of such criteria within their own traditions which matters.

IV

For a balanced picture we need to emphasize characteristic **differences between East and West**. To stay with Indian poetics, again and again Western naturalism is rejected. The Indian authority on aesthetics, Coowarasmamy: "We may say indeed, that whenever, if ever, Oriental art reproduces evanescent appearances, textures, or anatomical construction with literal accuracy, this is merely incidental, and represents the least significant part of the work. Because theology was the dominant intellectual passion of the race, oriental art is largely dominated by theology. Oriental art is not concerned with Nature, but with the nature of Nature; in this respect it is nearer to science than to our modern ideas about art. Where modern science uses names and algebraic formulas in establishing its hierarchy of forces, the East has attempted to express its understanding of life by means of precise visual symbols. In this constant reference to types of activity, Oriental art differs essentially from Greek art and its prolongations in Europe."

Helmut von Glasenapp[12] stresses, that "the classical poetry of the Indians is a learned one, which presupposes as a condition of its appreciation knowledge of certain rules." In a survey of the main teachings of Indian critics he makes it evident that they concentrate on stylistic differentiations, which far surpass those of European rhetorics (we shall later see that this does not apply to Japanese criticism). Herrmann Jacobi's[13] still unsurpassed description, dating from 1910, equally stresses the "scholastic and dialectical character" of all of Indian scholarly literature (and with it of literary criticism) and the tendency of Indian scholars towards abstract conceptualization. We hear the same from a modern specialist, Helmut Hoffmann: "For Indian literature it has to be considered as typical that the borderlines between

poetic and scholarly literature remain indistinct. We are not allowed to project Western criteria on either if we do not want to miss the typical character of Indian creativity. The genres of the novel, poetry, and the art epic have in common that they all have to be counted to scholarly literature. The lyrical 'cry from the heart' [Urlaut], as we expect it in the West from true poetry since Goethe, is unknown in India. Fixed cliched descriptions are indispensable." And in regards to the theater, he says: "It must not be overlooked how little 'dramatic' in the Western sense Indian theater is. Tragedy is unknown and in our terminology we should rather call Indian plays libretti (which, by the way, also applies to Chinese plays)..."V Chinese drama, which rather should be called "operetta" (or "Singspiel"in German) developed in the 12th century; the novel in the 14th. Both were discussed in early theoretical treatises as fictitious narratives. The first theoretical treatment of plays is especially interested in the sung interludes and their presentation (Dolezelova-Velingerova). Chinese Ming-dynasty novels were roughly contemporary with German Baroque novels. Both types were written in highly developed cultures, if ever so different ones. Willy R. Berger expresses his scepticism of fruitful comparisons in the following manner: "As much as we wish to agree with Etiemble's exhortations that Comparative Literature should push beyond mere registration of historical connections towards an esthetical analysis of comparable works, we still have to doubt that a comparison between a Chinese novel of the Ming-dynasty and a European novel of the Baroque period can yield anything besides those abstract 'conditions sine qua non du poeme' which equal the Platonic detachment and ubiquity of Staiger's basic concepts." Günther Debon repeatedly stresses the "high value, which was always put on lyrical poetry in China, quite in contrast to Europe where the epic poem and drama occupied the first place."- Again it is the *historical* dimension of literary appreciation which is being brought to our attention.- Debon characterizes Chinese lyrical poetry in the following manner: "What we consider to be typically Chinese, a predominantly this-wordly orientation, a rational and moderate attitude, inspired by subserviency to father, mother, and the ancestors, obliged to the emperor, nevertheless peace-loving; and, as far as form is concerned, measured and leaning towards symmetry. Next to Confucianism (until 1911)

Indian Buddhism shaped Chinese literature decisively (from the 3rd to the 9th century) and especially - so to say as mystical antidote to rational Confucianism - Taoism: While the scholar-official was officially Confucian, his secret affection often was Taoism." One reason why poetry was valued more highly than the novel or play is the appreciation of the former as a direct personal expression of the poet, a member of the elite, based on real experience. Debon stresses that "literary activity until recently remained a privilege of a small elite, since the system of writing required the mastery of about nine thousand different signs . Popular poetry was only from time to time written down. For that reason, our knowledge of this kind of literature is based on a very small amount of tradition, and what we know has been imprinted by the spirit of the elite." - It is in the light of these observations of a true connoisseur that we should view the previously mentioned isolated incidence of a 16th century scholar interested in folklore.- Especially in regards to the style of scholarly treatises of literature before the influence of Western criticism, Van Zoeren writes: "The language of criticism was allusive and metaphorical, and critics combined a passion for key terms with an almost total disinterest in the problem of their definition. Instead, writers on literature assumed a complex web of continuities and analogies between and within the natural and social/cultural worlds that worked to subvert and evade analytic distinctions." However, in regards to the practical effect of literature, he adds: "The belief that poetry and literature generally had powerful pragmatic powers - and thus an important moral and political dimension - continued as a mainstay of traditional criticism over the next 20 centuries and survives today." A similar description would apply to Japanese criticism, as will be illustrated below.

IV

What can we say about **Japanese aesthetic theory** before the Meiji-reformation? A relatively new analysis of the Japanese concept of beauty, written by two Japanese (Isutzu, Toshihiko and Toyo), starts with the characteristic statement that the Japanese sense of beauty so radically differs from what is normally associated with aesthetic experience in the West that it affects us as mysterious, enigmatic or esoteric. According to Makoto Ueda and Yuriko Saito, the mood-qualities *sabi* (*sabishi*, lonely), *wabi* (the beauty

in/of poverty), *shiori* (compassion etc.), *hosomi* (sensitivity etc.), and others (like "inspired") which Basho suggests for the *haiku* are supposed to have sprung from the tea ceremony for which there is no parallel in Europe. For that reason alone it is difficult for Westerners to emphasize with them. They are, moreover, so vaguely defined that even Japanese have problems in describing them satisfactorily and in delineating them from each other. They are certainly not suitable as *universal* values . The same applies to four more concepts which are supposed to relate more to *technical* aspects of Haiku-composition: *fragrance* (meant possibly as unity of mood), *resonance* (of emotion?), *reflection* (pensiveness?), and *lightness* (detachment from wordly concerns?). These are supposed to determine the relationship between parts of a poem. We might call them "emotional correspondences" (French "correspondances"), again qualities of mood, which cannot be defined and differentiated without difficulty. The attitude of "lightness," which can include humor, is doubtlessly inspired by Zen-Buddhism as well as by Taoism and also for that reason not easily transferable to the West. Even more difficult to define are the value-concepts of Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443). This is especially true of his main ideal of *yugen* (Ueda, 1963: elegant, detached and subtle beauty with mystical overtones) which is supposed to be indefinable by language. That is why, since Zeami, the Japanese have been trying to illustrate its meaning with poetic imagery (falling cherry blossoms, etc.). It can be argued, of course, that stylized melancholy also can be found in other cultures. However, the Japanese concepts are especially hazy and completely dependent on their illustration (Ingarden might have said: "concretization") and therefore not transferable to other cultures. The Japanese would be the first to reconfirm this (and to congratulate themselves of being so "unique", comp. Nomura). Our understanding of Japanese aesthetic concepts is especially hampered by the fact that they are often applied differently from our way of using them. One of the most respected contemporary critics, Makoto Ueda, for example, tries to enlighten us about Zeami's theory of *No*, which is supposed to be concentrated on three basic principles: "imitation, by which he meant representation of essences rather than surface mimicry" [therefore, we should not call it "imitation" but rather "symbolic representation" or something of that kind], "yugen, elegant beauty

with underlying implications of mystery and depth" [whatever that is supposed to mean . It is difficult for Westerners to associate "elegant beauty" with "mystery and depth"], "and 'the sublime', the highest type of theatrical effect, which he [Zeami] suggested by means of the image of the sun shining brightly at midnight." What is a Western scholar to do with such descriptions? This is only one example of many such doubly-obscured attempts at defining aesthetic phenomena, the first time by the original author, and the second time by its interpreter. We can only name a few additional concepts which are all equally unclear and unsatisfactorily defined: *aware* ("pathos"[14]), *sui* ("pure essence" in Ueda's translation), *iki* ("high spirit," both latter terms relating to metropolitan elegance in the Edo-period), *makoto* ("honesty") and *masuraoburi* ("masculinity"), *mono no aware* ("pathos of things" according to Ueda; "emotional identification with nature" according to Mottori Norinaga, 1730-1801), the latter two ideals again developed in the Edō-period. It should not be overlooked that all of these concepts refer to the *content* of literature and not to its *form*. There are, of course, translations of European, especially German, concepts like *yubi* for beauty, *suko* for the sublime and *kaigyaku* for humor. But, according to F.Y. Nomura, "they are almost never used in traditional aesthetic writing."[15] If we ignore separate key concepts and look for permanent tendencies in traditional Japanese aesthetics, the differences with the West become even more clear. Yuriko Saito described the typically Japanese predilection for the imperfect, the decaying, the impoverished and aging and half-hidden, which comes from the tea-cult and has no correspondence in the West: "The obscured moon, fallen cherry blossoms, and the end of a love affair are much more interesting to the imagination than if they were at the height of their condition." A preference for asymmetrical buildings and flower arrangements can be observed. The ceramist, Suzuki Aisaku, claims asymetry (together with economical use of space) as the most important characteristic of Japanese art and explains it with the spirit of the tea-ceremony, which in turn is influenced by Zen: "Symmetry has a static character, while asymetry confers the experience of dynamic movement. Zen-Buddhism brought the dynamic character into Japanese aesthetics. The central idea of Buddhism is 'emptyness'. According to this philosophy, things have no essence.

Everything is flowing. Things are only temporary composites of elements, which after a while form new composites. Zen-Buddhism essentially influenced the tea ceremony." These ideals contrast with those of the Chinese and with somewhat contemporary European buildings in the Renaissance and Baroque period. Only during the Bauhaus movement did the Germans develop an understanding for Japanese taste. One of the first to do so was the German architect Bruno Taut. Yanagi Soetsu, the propagator of the Japanese folkart movement (mingei) at the beginning of the last century, summarized his penchant for the "irregular," e.g., in tea-bowls, by saying "There is a little something left unaccounted for." We might call it the lovable touch of human imperfection as contrasted to the cold and impersonal perfection of the machine. Saito stresses that the propagators of this kind of aesthetics of the incomplete and imperfect themselves came from the socially privileged and highly cultured strata of society and that they could have well afforded to surround themselves with perfection had they wanted to do so. Perfection, however, bored them; and we cannot help but think of the insights of the "strata aesthetics" of a Nicolai Hartmann or Roman Ingarden who taught us, amongst other things, that we derive aesthetic stimulation precisely from "filling out spots of indeterminacy," which is almost as much as saying "completing in our mind the incomplete and imperfect." This is what we are doing when we read Japanese poems, especially *haikus*, which are still popular, or if we contemplate *sumie*, Japanese ink paintings. The word *yojo* "expresses the quality of a poem in which the words do not fully express the feeling which the poet wishes to express" (Debon 1984, 6). What these forms of "artistic minimalism," as Saito calls them, have in common, what their attraction consists of, and where their limitations lie, has been previously shown (Ruttkowski, 1977, 1989). Saito points out that "the possibility and effectiveness of indirect expression require some degree of culturally shared associations and allusions, such as cherry blossoms symbolizing transience and elegance or an autumn dusk evoking desolation and loneliness. Otherwise, the experience will simply result in frustration and disappointment."(548) Similar observations could be made in regards to emblems in Western Baroque poems.-

he **relationship of the Japanese to nature** as it is reflected in poems also differs from its Western counterpart. Nomura (716) even goes as far as saying that: "In Oriental arts nature seems more important than the human being." This certainly applies to Chinese literati paintings, in which minuscule human figures appear in the landscape. For Japan, Yuriko Saito points out correctly "The aspects of nature frequently praised for their aesthetic appeal are relatively small, intimate, tame, and friendly. Little appreciation is given to the gigantic, overpowering, frightening, or aloof. Secondly, nature is considered fundamentally identical to humans, and the sensuous expression of this identity becomes the object of aesthetic appreciation. One characteristic of the Japanese aesthetic appreciation is the fact that it lacks the experience of the sublime, which according to the Western theories of the eighteenth century, is typically invoked by overpowering, gigantic, or dangerous aspects of nature. Japanese aesthetic tradition aestheticizes the evanescence of natural phenomena. The impermanence of natural phenomena is appreciated as providing an analogy to human transience, and this affinity gives solace to the otherwise pessimistic outlook on life." This is also why in *haiku* the seasons play such an important role and the *haiku* has to hint at it, within its very limited amount of syllables, by means of the *kigo* (season word).

VII

One could assert that lyrical poetry is *known* to be untranslatable and, therefore, incomparable as far as its value is concerned because it is simply too strongly determined by and dependent on language. Japanese poetry, for example, has no rhyme (in contrast to Chinese[16]). But it has so many homophones that almost everything can be said with a "double-entendre" and often it can only be clarified with the help of the Chinese signs. How about the larger **epic genres** in which content is usually clarified by context?

In Murasaki Shikibu's *Genji Monogatari* the Japanese have created a novelistic masterwork many centuries before the West. Edward Seidensticker, however, prefers to call it a "romance" and not a "novel," since he defines the former as "a story remote from the ordinary and centered upon remarkable events," and the latter as "a story of the familiar, even

commonplace, centered upon character." Elsewhere (53) he refers to "the lyricism of the *Genji.*" - To my knowledge, works of the complexity and at the same time almost musical composition of the novels of a Thomas Mann have not been written in Japan up to now. Good Japanese novels impress us by atmospheric detail. Their plots, however, are comparatively loosely structured. They have, like old Japanese music, no real ending, at least for our sensibility. Inner development of their heroes is hardly ever shown, only vacillations in their momentary moods. If Prince Genji would have been immortal, his adventures could have been told over many more books.- How differently ends Wolfram's (roughly contemporary) *Parzival* with the achievement of attaining the holy grail and with it a cultural ideal. Edward Seidensticker (1982, 51) appropriately remarks: "Had Proust stopped writing somewhere along the way, we would have known it ... Whether or not the *Genji* is finished is among the problems that will be debated forever."

We can see in this loose structure of Japanese novels an anticipation of modern tendencies. Earl Miner writes: "A couple of decades ago, even 'modern Japanese novels' were thought strange in characterization, plot, and conclusion. Now, after readers have absorbed a good deal of recent Western fiction of the anti-novelistic kind, Japanese literature has become far easier to teach. The recent shift to antimimetic presumptions (Becket and Borges, for example) has seemed to fit in with the non-mimetic presumptions of Japanese literature. Before, the burden of proof was to show that Japanese literature was, indeed, literature; now, the need is to show that it is a literature different from the literature of the West.

Tanizaki Junichiro's *Makioka Sisters* also dismisses us with an open ending.- Kawabata's novels impress us mainly by descriptions of moods; in other words, by their lyrical components, not their composition. - Even Mishima Yukio's novels, which more than others emulate those of the West (viz. Mishima's admiration for Thomas Mann), often have unconvincing plots and strangely pale and sterile figures[17].- These admittedly superficial observations show that even in contemporary, equally developed and "Westernized" civilizations with different historical backgrounds literary values do not have to be the same. Just to mention a few more characteristic differences: there was no *tragedy* and no tragic experience, in the sense of

German Classicism, in Japanese literature until the Meiji-reform. Equally, no *comedy of character* in the sense of Moliere, no analogy to the *detective novel* or to the *novella*, just as there was no equivalent to *no*, *kabuki* or *haiku* in the West. To a certain degree we can explain historically or sociologically[18] the absence of some kinds of emotional experience and their corresponding literary genres. But these differences have no relevance for the *evaluation* of national literatures.

VIII

What we said about epic genres in the East and West makes it clear that **unity** is an important value in Western literature. Unity can be primarily understood as "organic" (Aristotle[19], Goethe) or as "structural" (esp. by *Prague Structuralism, New Criticism* and, in Germany after the last world war, by the school of *Immanente Interpretation*). For us, there is no contradiction between the "organic" and the "structural" view of unity.

First, we have to clarify that the expression "unified" only has aesthetic relevancy when it is being applied evaluatively. Otherwise, it could simply mean "uniform" or even "monotonous." According to Wolfgang Kayser, "(Ein)stimmigkeit" does not have to be without inner tension. Also Ingarden speaks of a "polyphony of values" as a precondition for a "great" work.

Consideration must also be given to *intended* disharmony (Wolfgang Kayser: "Stimmungsbruch")[20] which we can find, for example, in ironic poems by Heinrich Heine or occasionally already in Baroque poems[21].

It is apparent that the criterion of unity is given much less, if any, consideration in non-Western literatures. We have just observed this in Japanese novels. Let us look now at Japanese theater, e.g., the plots of unabbreviated Kabuki-(melo-)drama. Here we can hardly speak of "drama" in the Western sense of the word. Kabuki is eminently "theatrical" (stage-effective), not, however, dramatic in the sense of Aristotle. Earl Miner reaffirms this with somewhat different words: "Japanese theatrical genres are experiences rather than dramatic texts."

The criterion of a dramatically concentrated plot with climactic structure - be it in a play or in some narrative genres, like the *novella* or the *detective story* - can, of course, be justified psychologically: The subordination of all parts under one main theme serves concentration on the main impact of the work, which will be more powerful the less attention is taken away from it. Aristotle's famous "three unities" for tragedy were intended that way. And even though modern theatrical and cinematographic techniques could dispense with two of these, the unity of persons and of place, the most important one, of plot, was never abandoned in the West.

Does, however, the criterion of unity present a *universal* value? Isn't it rather a fact that viewers belonging to *our* cultural sphere experience it as value since it meets their specific psychological needs? And what are these needs?- Mainly for a surveillable order (disorder causes us discomfort, Freud would have an explanation) and for suspense (as modern creatures of an urban civilization we get easily-bored). These needs might also correspond to the rational character of our culture, which not only determines our science and technology but also our music and philosophy. - Should we see this as a *peculiarity* of our culture or as *value* which can be generalized? - In reality, it is *us*, after all, who project sense onto the world surrounding us. And not always do we succeed.[12] - Paradoxically, it is *Western* literature that combined in the genre of classical drama an extremely *realistic way of representation* (stage design, technique of acting) with a *highly constructed plot*[13]. We do not notice any longer the "artificial" and "unnatural" character of our conventional dramatic plots because we are used to them, just as the Edo-period Japanese were used to the stylized presentation of *kabuki*, the pre-revolution Chinese to the peculiar conventions of the *Peking-opera*, the southern Indians to those of the *katakali*, and the Turks before Ata Türk to those of the *karagöz*.

While traditional Western theater could claim *concentration on one main impact* as a reason for its high valuation of "unity," other traditional forms of theater could probably name *adherence to reality* as their artistic motivation. Life's incidences are rarely structured according to Gustav Freytag's pyramid-model. Unresolved relationships with "open endings" are the rule, and not the exception.

Especially in regards to the different forms of theater, we might generalize that stylization (even artificiality) is not a characteristic uniquely "Eastern." It rather is practiced in different domains. While in Eastern theater it is mainly the form of representation which is highly stylized, in Western drama it is the structuring of the plot. However, since our stage design as well as the makeup and acting technique of Western actors look "natural," we succumb to the illusion that it is the whole of Western theater which is supposed to be more realistic than Eastern theater.

IX

We observed some profound differences in Eastern and Western literature concerning the importance of "unity" and the use of realism, stylization, and plot structure. - Again: are there **pervading differences**, at least in the *traditional* literatures before "Westernization," which make evaluative comparisons eo ipso impossible?

Even those who wish to "consider the high cultures as principally of equal value" as Spengler or Toynbee did, can still, as Horst Rüdiger (139) or Alexander Rüstow do, maintain "that the history of Greek literature, on which Western literature is based to a large degree, stands as a unique testimony of the liberation from barbarity, superstition, feudalism and foreign domination." This commonly taken stance confirms our belief that the great literatures of this world can be compared "ethno-poetically," but not evaluatively[24].

This is in accord with Earl Miner and Jozsef Szili who saw the main difference between Western and Eastern literary theory in the fact that the former derived its concepts (since Plato and Aristotle) mainly from drama and therefore saw imitation as the main characteristic of literature. That is why initially Western literary theory could not differentiate lyrical poetry from narrative genres, and not even the kind of lyrical poetry which Greek tragedy at that time mainly consisted of. - Since literary theory of each culture can only derive its standards from its own literary genres, Greek poetics was philosophical and abstract, while the Chinese and Japanese poetics, which were derived from lyrical poetry, were "imagistic, lyrical, affective-expressive." According to Miner, "most critical systems of the world

developed by means of defining literature from lyrical poetry. The Greek system is unusual, probably unique, in that it derived from drama."

György Lukacs describes the development of art as emancipation from religion and 'allegory' and reaches the conclusion that aesthetic *mimesis* never succeeded in the East as a lasting influence on the development of the arts. For Western poetics, imitation is the central concept, just as affectivism is the heart of Eastern literary theory. In the same way, the Indian scholar Ananda Coomaraswamy[25] repeatedly assures us that realism and naturalism never took roots in the East.

What about Indian poetics? Szili writes that what it has in common with Chinese poetics is that dramatic composition is absent in both. The problem of the dramatic form is not even mentioned. Besides, both accord the narrative catalogue, the chronicle, and the primitive essay an equal status with the lyrical genres and the old-Indian poetics treats poetic and didactical texts in the same way. Also, the earliest Chinese texts on poetics do not separate the realm of treatise, letter, speech, and chronicle from that of narrative and lyrical poetry.

All of this indicates again that our strict division of the three genres *lyric-epic-dramatic* (with the possible addition of a *didactic* or "audience-related" genre[26]) was not made by non-Western literatures.

X

In regards to Western and Eastern **canon-formation**, Mihaly Szegedy-Maszak (132) states that "Canons may have been more static in non-Western cultures because in the Western world artistic developments were often a history of changing generations - at least since the Renaissance - whereas the Asiatic developments extended over greater stretches of time. A much more rigid patriarchal and despotic socio-political system may explain why canonicity played a more important role in Asian than in Western culture. *The classical anthology defined by Confucius*, a collection of 305 poems, which existed more or less in the present form even before Confucius, has been a canonized anthology for the past twenty centuries. With the possible exception of the Bible, there was no book in the Western world

which could exert such a profound influence on virtually all cultural products."[27] At another place (132), he states: "The conclusion is inescapable that a canon is a pragmatic concept and never an embodiment of immanent values."[151]

Günther Debon (1984,6) similarly remarks on the "continuity, founded in the respect for the old and traditional" as a characteristic of the East-Asian literatures. After all, Confucianism practically remained state religion up to the 20th century.[28] "The fight for renewal, be it in regards to form or to contents, always met much stronger resistance in the Far East than in the West." This means that traditions were preserved and kept alive because they were old and for that reason alone venerable. It is inconceivable that later centuries evaluated those venerable texts according to *esthetic* criteria.

XI

Aleida Assmann, in an important article, points to George Steiner's differentiation of **"literary" and "cultural" texts,** "which does not concern different groups of texts, but rather different ways of accessing possibly identical texts." In other words, we can see the same texts in two completely different ways, as "works of art" or as cultural documents. However, "the perspective on literature as autonomous or cultural texts is mutually exclusive."

Beginning with the invention of the printing press and with the post-medieval nationalization of cultures (in Germany with the establishment of Germanistik as an academic discipline between 1820 and 1840), "the differentiation of belletristic literature from the ensemble of cultural activities solidifies." Assmann speaks of an "emancipation of the domain of literature by means of aestheticizing and historicizing literary texts." We could also (with Max Weber) talk of an increasing specialization and "compartmentalization in societal disciplines with their own institutions, autonomous organization and dynamics of development."

According to Assmann "the idea of the autonomy of art begins with the Enlightenment. It develops out of the separation of the moral and aesthetic

discourse." It leads to *l'art pour l'art* as well as to *poesie concrete*. "The *literary* text addresses the reader as an individual and autonomous subject. demands aesthetic distance [we are reminded of Kant's 'disinterested pleasure' and all its later formulations] and incorporates a non-obligatory truth. The reader would never dream of confusing books with real life." Assmann speaks of the "release of literature out of the responsibility of being the vessel of binding truth. By separating itself from the servitude to theology and philosophy it comes into its own as fiction *Literary* texts are pressured to be innovative. The motor of their production is permanent innovation with the complimentary tendency towards becoming outmoded. being forgotten, being pushed into oblivion Texts react to each other in a mode of surpassing and outperforming each other. The new pushes away the old Not only is a permanent shifting of attention dominant, but so are the conventions of perception because of the constant change between automatization and new alienation The *literary* text stands in the open horizon of history."

Quite in contrast, "the addressee of the *cultural text* is the reader representing a group and being a part of a larger unit Behind the *cultural text* stands the claim to a binding and timeless truth *Cultural texts* are canonized. The *cultural text* stands within the closed horizon of a tradition It receives its trans-historical quality of eternal validity The paradigm of the cultural text is the Bible."

If we compare these statements with what Coowarasmamy says about traditional Indian literature and Pauline Yu about Chinese, we cannot evade the thought that possibly in the East this "specialization, emancipation, aesthetization, and historization of literary texts" either did not happen (yet) or happened later than in the West. This alone would render Eastern literature incomparable in evaluative terms with Western literature, since it makes no sense to apply our Western standards to literatures which themselves have neither been created nor selected (canonized) according to these standards.

Barbara Stoler Miller similarly stresses, in respect to the "dominant literatures of Asia" [the longlived and influential traditions of China's, Japan's and India's literatures], that "each tradition has its own mechanisms for

establishing and transmitting cultural values by selection and exclusion. These processes determined what it meant to be a 'classic' in various parts of Asia at different times." We add a final note: since these mechanisms of selection are based (at least in the East) on religious and philosophical criteria (Weltanschauung), and not on aesthetic ones, we cannot expect them to be appraisable through Western standards.[29]

XII

The foregoing considerations lead us to the **conclusion** that all questions posed in the summary have to be answered with a resounding NO.

Some **basic differences between Eastern and Western literatures** arise from the fact that the latter derive their concepts mainly from drama, and the former mainly from lyrical genres. Therefore, Western literature is comparatively philosophical and abstract (Miner). Imitation is its central concept (Lukacs). Epic and dramatic genres are appreciated more highly than in the East (Debon). Realism and even Naturalism were highly respected in the West, and more or less despised in the East (Coowarasmamy). The constant artistic change and development in the West is bound to the succession of generations (Szegedy) and powered by the striving of almost all artists since the Renaissance for originality and innovation. This again had historical (sociological) reasons: the emancipation of the artist from society, the autonomy of his/her creations, the aesthetization and historization of "literary" texts (Assmann).

While the old **Arabic literatures** had no concept of literature in the Western sense and epos and drama were missing completely (Heinrichs), the **Indian literature** was mainly a "scholarly" one (Glasenapp) and the borderline between religious and profane literature was blurred (Hoffmann).

Indian and Chinese literature have in common that they did not develop "dramatic composition" in the Western sense. Their drama is not "dramatic" (Hoffmann) and should rather be called "libretto". Their pragmatical genres enjoy the same respect as do the lyrical (Szili). Poetry as well as literature in general have a moral and political function and practical

use (Van Zoeren). Poetry in particular is imagistic, emotional, and expressiv (Miner) and appreciated more highly than novel and "libretto" (Debon). since it is taken as a direct expression of the experience of members of the aristocratic class.

Chinese and Japanese literature share common ground in having drama which is not "dramatic" (Miner). Furthermore, they show similarity to Indian theatrical productions in possessing highly stylized forms of representation (Ruttkowski). A characteristic quality is the respect for continuity and anything old (Debon). Therefore, canons are static (Szegedy) and mainly determined by religious considerations. They contain (in Assmann's words) "cultural" texts, which, in principal, cannot become outdated, as compared to "literary" ones in the West.

For **Japanese literature** in particular, a comparatively loose plot-structure is typical (Ruttkowski). It never contained a "tragedy" in the Western sense (Seidensticker). The language of literary criticism is metaphorical and rich in innuendos. It likes to avoid analytical distinctions (Van Zoeren) in favor of a poetical and vague use of concepts (Ruttkowski).

Therefore, literatures of radically different cultures are not comparable regarding **literary values**.- "Universal" literary values do not exist.- Literary values also do not remain the same within the development of one culture.- The fact that certain works of literature have been valued over centuries does not indicate that "eternal values" exist. Rather, these works have been ideal objects for the projection of various "values" by different generations of interpreters.-

In sum, the **concept of literature** is not the same in radically different cultures and it does not even remain the same within the development of *one* culture.- The so-called basic genres (i.e., the lyric, epic, and dramatic) are not comparable within radically different cultures.- Certain analogous phenomena in Indian and Western literature are not indicative of basic similarities between these literatures.- Not even the theory deduced from these literatures is similar!- Furthermore, a unified theory of literature might not be desirable, since it might blur our distinction of characteristic differences.-

Thus, **Literary canons** were not (and are not) established mainly according to perceived aesthetic values in the selected works, but at least as much according to historical determinants. Inevitably, they differ from each other to the same degree that the cultures out of which they grew differ from each other.

NOTES

Portions of this article were presented in German at the 10th International Congress of the *International Association for Germanic Studies*, Sept. 10th to 16th 2000 in Vienna, under the title "Kanon und Wert." All translations in this article are mine. In order to support my points I had to quote secondary sources more extensivley than I would have preferred. This was necessitated by the topic. No one can be at the same time a specialist in Indian, Chinese, Japanese and various other literatures and read the original source literature of all the scholars that I quoted. For this reason, it would be foolhardy to forego inquiry into comparative questions of the kind I have raised simply for lack of literacy and expertise in multiple languages.

2 Yu: "The use of the more peculiarly Western critical concepts and categories in the study of Chinese literature is, in principle, no more inappropriate than the classical scholar's use of modern techniques and methods for his study of ancient materials. Certainly, the problems of historical and cultural contexts, of linguistic and generic particularities, and of intended audience and effects must be considered, but a serious critic has every right to ask whether novel means may be found and applied in each instance, so that the work of verbal art may be more fully understood and appreciated."

3 Bush: "Certain characteristics of traditional Chinese criticism become clearer in contrast with Western models. For instance, a Western critic might consider political periodization an extrinsic type of classification when applied to the development of the arts, but in China art was generally viewed as an integral part of government and society, and there was no initial distinction between ethical and artistic standards of judgement Rankings of

poets in broad groupings are likely to have been influenced by extra-artistic factors such as social position or political career ...."

Similarly . Maureen Robertson: "From a modern Western point of view, period schemes borrowed from political and intellectual history are to be termed 'extrinsic', not being based on evidence taken exclusively from the art objects themselves. From a traditional Chinese point of view, the political periodization cannot be seen as wholly extrinsic to art history Artistic activity was not felt to take place in isolation from the complex and powerful forces set in motion by the character and authority of individual reigning sovereigns, and periodization by political periods serves not only descriptive but explanatory functions in traditional historical thinking."

4 Comp., Rudolf Lüthe: "Underlying any statement with respect to the value of aesthetic experience lurks a normally not recognized decision of an anthropological order. The notion of man determines any correspondent theory concerning the value of aesthetic experience. Therefore this value is necessarily relative: there are as many valid decisions in respect to value as there are valid ideas of man. This forces us to acknowledge that we cannot finally give *the* answer to the question: What is the nature of the value attributed to the aesthetic experience? - All we can do is to draw logical conclusions from an accepted concept of man, which we must *first* decide on."

5. Haskell M. Block: " most of us would agree that 'World Literature' is not a happy term."

Comp. Mihaly Szegedy-Maszak: "My perception is that the precise boundaries of *Weltliteratur* have century, a similar phenomenon - a florishing engagement with non-European art - accentuated the fragility of the familiar idea of beauty. (It is at this time that the idea of Western culture as a distinct type appears.) To bolster the stability of a public sphere engaged with aesthetic value, eighteenths century convention fashioned an instructive set of models drawn from antiquity, namely a classical Western canon." We may assume that Silvers refers to the influence China exerted on Europa during the period of Enlightenment.-

For a more comprehensive discussion from the point of view of "Comparative Aesthetics" which "may contribute to the much-needed understanding of artistic and aesthetic phenomena from a pan-human perspective" comp. Van Damme, Wilfried; his paper contains the more recent relevant literature.

[8] His thoughts concerning the timeless appeal of Homer should be compared to David Hume's comments: "The same HOMER who please at ATHENS and ROME two thousand years ago, is still admired at PARIS and LONDON. All the changes of climate, government, religion, and language, have not been able to obscure his glory."

[9] Pauline Yu begins an important essay with the sentence: "Given the eclectic, syncretic, and nonsystematic nature of most Chinese literary criticism, it is possible to find support for virtually any theory of literature in the works of a particular critic."

[10] Yuan Hongdao, 1568-1610

[11] Corresponding to T.S. Eliots "impersonality" and Edward Bulloughs 'Psychical Distance'.

James W. Manns asks: "Even if we were to accept the whole of the Kantian account of beauty, there is room to wonder whether any one of us could ever actually be in a position to certify, 'Yes, I have now set aside all personal, individuating concerns and have achieved a state of total disinterestedness.' It may *feel* that way to us, and yet we may be overlooking the simplest of distractions or attractions that is responsible for the delight we are experiencing."

As to Kant's claim, that all people feel similar in regards to taste, Manns suggests that in Kant's sentence "Our judgements are universalizable *because* we are like-minded individuals" the word *because* should be replaced by *to the degree that* (169). Later he writes: "In all these cases where works of *drastically* different cultures meet nevertheless with our approval, it *must* be judged that, however great the apparent differences in overall style of life may be, there are still certain grounds on which a genuine

and deep sharing takes place."(171 f.)

12 "These rules in their entirety form a special science, the *Alankarasastra*, literally 'the teachings about decoration' (of poetic discourse), which word used to be translated often as 'rhetorics', now more fittingly with 'poetics'. The oldest manual of Alankara passed down to us is Bharata's *Instructions for the Art of Acting* , which besides its main topic, theater, also already develops the doctrine of Rasas it most likely stems from the first century after Christ."

13 "Excelling in abstraction, they always remained children in observation and experimentation. Only in one case were they sharp observers. They succeeded admirably in grammar where they only had to examine their language, and they were in an equally advantageous position in poetics Their school books contain a wealth of carefully selected stanzas. Doctrines are not derived by means of abstract deduction, but rather demonstrated by examples from literature. Formal elegance, surprising or witty phrases, imagery antitheses and rhetorical arabesques are demanded from and found in almost every poem While the detail is dazzling one loses the overview. One does not demand from the poet the creation of new material or that he should at least penetrate an old one with his intellect as to re-create it in a sense Normally, one is content with pleasant arrangement In witty, unconventional phrasing and in poetical decor was seen the essential character of poetry Under the concept of poetic decor was subsumed the whole realm of tropes and figures, alliteration and other sound-figures, as well as comparison, metaphor, hyperbole etc. However, in regards to the latter the Indians were taking specialization to a much greater extreme than we did and subdivided some forms of presentation which we subsume under one name (e.g, comparison), into many special figures. That is how they soon came to differentiate soon 25, later almost 80, and finally over 100 forms of presentation. They never tired of defining them and of finding examples of them in literature or of making them up For a long time, this task was occupying the theoreticians to such a degree that they did not even pose the question of the essence of poetry. They believed that the latter was completely inherent in stylistic excellence and poetical figures."

14 A favorite concept of Fujiwara no Shunzei, 1114-1204.

15 F.Y. Nomura (1956, 715): "As far as modern Japanese aesthetic theory is concerned (e.g., Ohnishi's) we have to understand that it developed mainly under German influence, as did philosophy in general." Takeuchi, Toshio: "We can not deny that the Japanese people were rather poor in

aesthetic reflection Aesthetics in a strict sense did not develop until the middle of the nineteenth century."

16 Debon: "Most likely the Chinese can lay claim to having invented the rhyme. It remained obligatory until modern time."(9) This is contrasted by Japanese poetry which has never known rhyme. It shows how different both languages are in spite of the shared *kanji* (Debon: "logograms," not "ideograms").

17 Seidensticker (1982, 47-53) writes: "Murasaki Shikibu is seen, like Proust, as an explorer of states of mind. There is not a great deal of psychological exploration in the Genji. [...]there is little dialogue nor is there much by way of soliloquy or overt analysis of states of mind. The novelist Kawabata Yasunari once said that the fiction of Japan is peopled by ghosts [..] He held this to be most certainly true of his own work. He meant that the characters in most Japanese novels flicker onto the stage, and while there seem on the point of flickering off again."

18 A likely reason why there were no "love-tragedies" (of the kind of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*) in cultures imprinted by Buddhism (or Hinduism), could be the conviction that all physical and psychological states are in constant change and eventually doomed to dissolve. If this is applied to human relationships (and internalized by a majority), an exaggerated emotional fixation on a beloved must appear to be absurd and unrealistic from the outset. Passionate attachments will not be formed. Even within Western culture they are characteristic only for the last 300 years and only for certain social strata. In Eastern cultures, passion has a taste of destruction and egocentrism. Arranged marriages are still widely accepted and considered to make a safer background for the upbringing of children than "love-marriages."

Where there is no passion between the sexes there will not arise the type of conflict on which the "love-tragedy" is built. Societal obstacles to developing human attachments are accepted. Opposition is unthinkable. The extreme is a tearful double-suicide in Japanese *kabuki* (e.g., Chikamatsu's *Double-Suicide in Sonezaki*), and even that is a relatively late development

and could have been inspired by Western influence.- In *Genji-Monogatari*. disappointed women disappear in a monastery (probably having no other choice) and their former lovers into new adventures. Our romantic idea of "this one or no one!" is unknown. It has to look absurd to a culture convinced that everything changes anyhow soon enough.

19 Richard Tristmann says: "It was Aristotle who first thought it worth mentioning that "poems have beginnings, middles and ends" ; for the meaning of a literary work resides in its limited wholeness, in the sequence of its episodes and the integrity of its manner. and it is this wholeness that assures that the *mimesis* of poetry will be "more philosophic than history;" and in the same article. Tristman remarks that "strict canonicity [is] utterly indifferent to the test of consistency." - This reconfirms what we said about the ideal of "unity" in Western literature.

20 Schulte-Sasse speculates. that "the criteria of unity and coherence might have so many adherents for the simple reason that - considering the generality of the concept - they can be demonstrated in *any* text. A certain measure of unity and coherence is a general precondition for the understandability of texts. Linguistics calls it text-coherence." (46 f.) We are talking here about criteria of *poeticity*. which are equally observable in trivial literature, and not about criteria of *value*.

21 Comp. Schulte-Sasse, 1976, 40, 53.

22 The impossibility of discovering meaning in our lives has been a dominant theme in Western literature, roughly since the end of World War I. Together with the belief in any underlying truth, our trust in the permanence and reliability of the human personality was lost (at least since Bertolt Brecht's play *Mann ist Mann*, and even more so in the *Theatre of the Absurd*). Human beings are experienced as changeable and determined from the outside.

23 Exceptions: already during naturalism, Gerhart Hauptmann's play *Die Weber*, which replaces Gustav Freytag's pyramid-model by an episodic, revue-like form. In Brecht's *epico-didactical theater* and other "open" forms of theater this tendency is continued. It culminates in the *theater of the absurd*

which replaces the development of a plot by symbolic situations.

24 We cannot discuss here the linguistic schools which also see any system of values as relative and mediated by languages, or families of languages.

25 Coowarasmamy: "The *Genji Monogatari* might be compared with Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*. In each of these great works we do sense a kind of psychological modernity, and no doubt the narration is more personal and intimate than that of Homer or the *Mahabharata*. Yet the effect is not the result of accumulated observation, nor of any emphasis laid on individual temperamental peculiarities. The characters, just as in oriental paintings, differ more in what they do, than in what they look like. Oriental art rarely depicts or describes emotions for their own spectacular value."

Finally, he extends his observations into the realm of linguistics: " ... what we have called lack of emphasis or of dramatic crisis is expressed also in the actual intonation of Oriental languages. [...] Oriental poetry is always quantitative."

26 See my book *Die literarischen Gattungen: Reflexionen über eine modifizierte Fundamentalpoetik*. München-Berne: Francke 1968.

27 Günther Debon mentions that "presumably nowhere was literature accorded so high a value and no culture of the world was to that degree a culture of the book as was the Chinese and in its succession also the Japanese." (Introduction)

28 Debon: "In China, songs and prose texts, composed two and a half thousand years earlier, were learned by heart and cited in an almost uninterrupted tradition. After the iambic meter had asserted itself in the 2nd century, this practice remained customary until our century. Also, well until into our century, rhyming words were used in China, just as they had been used around the year 600. They were still being used, even when they no longer rhymed. In Japan, the tanka, the short poem, has remained a customary meter from the 7th century until now." ibid.

About our Western attitude towards canons, Richard Tristman observes: "Whatever the actual intelligence and witting or unwitting taste of those who establish canons, the newcomer to these texts first experiences the arbitrariness of their choice, and one's progress in reading consists essentially in learning to justify what one has already more or less faithfully accepted. In many circles of contemporary literary thought, the subtle element of coercion in this process has come to overshadow its potential for education or pleasure."(331-334).

From the feminist perspective, Elaine Showalter: "Canon formation is now understood as a historically grounded process, rather than an assertion of aesthetic value Canon-formation is an aspect of the power of critical discourses and institutions." (Comp. also Moxey, and Keith)

29 Pauline Yu (1988, 162-175, 175): "Valid comparisons involving any literature must begin with an adequate knowledge of the norms, conventions, and rules within which it was produced. one would hope that an awareness of literary traditions other than those of Western Europe might alert one to the problem of taking basic terms and concepts for granted, without consideration for the context in which they have arisen and to which they are being applied."

Similarly Simone Winko: "Literary criteria of evaluation are by no means timeless, and similarly they are not independent from societal developments and theories of other disciplines."(595) Furthermore, in regards to the 'mechanisms of canonization': "A more thorough analysis was hampered until our century by, amongst other things, the idea that it was always, so to say, by law, that the 'best' works and authors were canonized, or, in other words, the idea that in the canon universal values win out. The criteria, according to which texts are being selected and interpreted, are historically and culturally variable. Their predominance also depends on the respective interest group which enacts their canonization." (596) and: "The decision of what is representative for whom and what problems can be considered to be 'centrally human' depends on the norms and values of this group. Characteristics of the texts seem to play less of a role for canonization than contextual determinants" (598).- Comp. "Relativism" in Robert H. Winthrop.

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Faculty of Foreign Languages
Kyoto Sangyo University
Kamigamo-Motoyama, Kita-ku,
Kyoto 603, Japan

BOOK REVIEWS

Ananta Ch. Sukla, *Art and Representation: Contributions to Contemporary Aesthetics*, Westport (Connecticut), Praeger Publishers (Greenwood Publishing Group Inc.), 2001, pp. 282.

An understanding of the nature of art—what it means for an object to be an artwork, how an object or event acquires aesthetic significance, or how it embodies meaning—is extremely difficult, if not impossible, without a reasonable understanding of the concept of representation. A thoughtful examination of the history of aesthetic theory and art criticism would, I think, readily show that representation is a primary act of mind in which it seeks to articulate, or make sense, of its experience of the various aspects of the world. Sukla was not mistaken when he wrote: "representation is basically an oracular concept that explains the dualistic nature of human experience. It refers to the relation between two items in our experience—the internal and the external, the mind and the world." (1) Accordingly a study of this concept is *sine qua non* in any serious attempt to explore the meaning and nature of art. This book is "designed to offer a comprehensive view of representation in both its conceptual perspectives and application in understanding various art forms such as painting, photography, literature, dance, music, theater, and film." (20-21) It is comprehensive in four ways: first, it is an exploration of the concept of representation as such: what are the epistemological and ontological dimensions of representation? Second, it contains an analysis of the major art forms: what does it mean to say that a novel, a film, or a dance represent? Third, it is interdisciplinary: how does a philosopher, a historian, a painter, a literary figure, or a sculptor view representation? Fourth, it is cross-cultural: how do scholars from different cultural backgrounds analyze the concept of representation?

The Introduction is one of the most important contributions to the volume. It is an etymological, historical, and philosophical, discussion of the concept of representation as such. It is, moreover, an account of the evolution of this concept in its relation to our knowledge of the world and the artistic process; it delineates its career from Plato and Aristotle to Rorty and Derrida. The book is divided into two parts. I shall spotlight some of the chapters in both parts. My aim is to provide the reader with as clear an idea as possible about the topics, problems, and accomplishments of the book.

The first part is a critical exploration of the epistemological foundations of the concept of representation. John Llewelyn (University of Edinburgh) begins this exploration with the following question: how can we represent how language represents?" (30) Is language amenable to representation? Does it defy representation? Should we not distinguish representation as saying from representation as showing? But, is the representational function of language pictorial? Llewelyn discuses these and related questions in Wittgenstein, Locke, Derrida, Heidegger, Davidson, and Derrida in the background of Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine. In chapter 2 Robert S. Sharpe (University of Wales) rejects the view that a sentence, or a thought, is a representation, for otherwise representation in art would not be cognitive or educative, but it is. He argues that, as it is used in aesthetics, "representation" is close to the Greek "mimesis"; however, it is not mere imitation, even though an artwork may imitate an object or event in the world. On the contrary, an artwork is a creatively made object; it is an original. But the main focus of Sharpe's essay is the following question: "how do we learn from representation?" (59) He argues that we can learn from representation, and the way we learn from it is not, as he argued earlier, by example but "by showing us to construct representations ourselves. By being shown narratives, we learn how to

narrate and these narrations end with imagined primitive reactions." (65) This implies that the aesthetic experience is an act of imagination and as such creative. In reading a novel or seeing a film I construct the action of the novel or film in my imagination; I undergo the experience the artist underwent during the process of artistic creation. In this way I intuit the insight or knowledge potential in the novel or film. In chapter 3, F.R. Ankersmit (Groningen University) offers an enlightening and provocative discussion of representation in history and politics. He points out that the Greeks did not have a concept of representation; their democracy was direct, participatory. The people directly participated in the political process. Representation was a medieval idea; certain assemblies represented the three social classes: the nobility, the clergy, and the masses. Ankersmit begins his discussion with a clarification of the concept of representation. In aesthetics a representation contains two elements: resemblance and substitution.

An artwork should, at least to some extent, resemble the object it is supposed to represent. But thinkers such as Gombrich emphasized the element of substitution: "representation is a making present of what is (again) absent; or more formally, A is a representation of B when it can take B's place, can function as B's *substitute* or as B's *replacement* in its absence." (70) Ankersmit then proceeds to apply this understanding of representation in politics. He defends the thesis that "representative democracy as we know it is the mostly unlikely marriage of Athens and the Middle Ages." (69)

The representation model of knowledge, "the view that true beliefs represent or correspond to reality," (113) was strongly attacked by postmodern thinkers. Prominent among these thinkers was Jacque Derrida. The target of this attack was metaphysical essences and epistemological certainties. These essences and certainties were the foundation of representation. Accordingly if they were discredited then the basis of representation would actually crumble. And this is exactly what Derrida and other postmodernists tried to show. The critique of foundation in epistemology and metaphysics gave rise to a number of views such as "coherence and pragmatic theories of truth, social constructivists theories of reality, conventional theories of meaning, and cultural relativist theories of rationality. (Ibid.) But Horace L. Fairlamb (University of Houston-Victoria) valiantly and constructively argues that the " postmodern critique of foundations has proven ambiguous at best, and at worst self-contradictory." (Ibid.) By universalizing their own conclusions the postmodernists offered an alternative foundation of knowledge. It may well be the case that the traditional view of foundation is defective in some respects, but this is no warrant for dismissing the idea of foundation in explaining the possibility of meaning and knowledge. Fairlamb thinks that "the problem of traditional and modern epistemology, in other words, was not foundations, but the idea of reductive foundations. But in that case, postmodern skeptics may be right that no single ultimate foundation exists, yet wrong in concluding that there are no ultimate foundations at all." (114) The point that deserves mention is that the critique of postmodernism itself needs, indeed presupposes, a foundation. To be a valid critique it should be grounded in logic, objective truth, and the contingencies of history. Adorno provided this notion of critique.

The second part of the book is devoted to a study of the concept of representation in the various art forms. Dieter Peetz (University of Nottingham) leads this study with a discussion of the realist theory of pictorial representation. He tries to shed a light of understanding on the following question: "what is it for that particular canvas covered in configurations of oil paint by Constable, say, to be a pictorial representation of Wivenhoe Park? What is it more modestly for that configuration

of colored lines and circles to represent the routes and stations of the London Underground? And even more modestly, what is it for that configuration of dots to represent, say, fields of magnetic force or even a triangle?" (137) Peetz begins his analysis with a critical evaluation of the conventional, intentional, realist, and aspect theories of representation. He then develops his own theory of projection out of the aspect theory. In contradistinction to this theory, Peetz holds that "X is a representation of Y for X if standardly, without any belief by Z that X is Y, Z sees X as containing the projected Y-aspect, and the overall Y-aspect is successfully projected by their means." (144) Peetz finally launches a sharp criticism against Wolterstorff from the standpoint of his theory of projection.

Stephen Davies (University of Auckland) advances in chapter 11 a lucid, illuminating analysis of representation in music. He argues that music "is limited in what it can depict." (194) It is" not primarily a depictive art form, and the value of musical works is not mainly concerned with representational achievement, even where representation occurs." (202) Music is a temporal, dynamic process. If it depicts at all, it depicts temporal processes. Can it depict emotions? In some cases "where what is expressed is the emotion of a character in a work, that emotion is represented. But where it is the piece that is expressive, the emotion is not also represented." (196) One can certainly ask: can we really say that the expressed emotion of a character in a work is an instance of representation? I think not, because by its very nature, emotion resists depiction. From a phenomenological point of view, emotion is an event; as such it is more susceptible of expression than depiction, regardless of the context or standpoint from which we view it. Davies's argument and the conclusion of this chapter are worthy of detailed analysis. They are insightful.

In chapter 13 Thomas E. Wartenbeg (University of Mount Holyoke) points out that film "puts us in touch with the world in a distinctive manner." (210) How does it do this? Suppose we view Jimmy Stewart's 1939 movie *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. He looks very handsome in this movie. Do we see him here as a young man, or, do we see a representation of him? The question that Wartenberg discusses in this chapter is "whether film, like other art forms such as painting, involves the representation of the object it presents to its viewers. Or does it, because of its basis in photography, show us the objects themselves?" (Ibid.) In his attempt to answer this question Wartenberg critically evaluates in some depth the realist position. He takes into consideration the views of Andre Bazin, Kendall Walton, and Noel Carroll. Then on the basis of this evaluation he constructs a special concept of representation in film. He argues that film does not relate us \directly to objects in the world; it is an image of these objects. That is, what we experience when we see a film is not a scene in nature, an event, or a person but a representation of anyone of these. This representation may affect us cognitively or emotionally in certain ways but it is not a direct presentation of this scene, event, or person. Still the question remains: what is the ontological relation between the representation and the object represented in the film? Wartenberg avers that an answer to this question deserves a more detailed treatment due to limitation of space. We must view his contribution as a prolegomenon to a further discussion of this issue.

No inquirer into the nature of art in general and the concept of representation in particular can afford to neglect this book. It is a compendium of arguments, insights, views, and challenging ideas and ways of thinking about the nature of art. Although the authors who contributed chapters to these scholarly projects dealt with different questions concerning the concept of representation and how we should analyze it they were all united in focusing their attention on the most important aspects of the question of representation. This feature is missing in most of anthologies. I am confident that the present volume will remain a serous reference for research for decades to come.

Michael H. Mitias
Kuwait University

S.K. Saxena, *Hindustani Sangeet and a Philosopher of Art*: Music, Rhythm and Kathak Dance vis-à-vis Aesthetics of Susanne K. Langer, Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd.,2001, pp.383.

Saxena's philosophical analyses of different aspects of Hindustani Music and Kathak dance published during the last four decades have remained exemplary in the history of cross-cultural aesthetic scholarship. The most attractive feature of Saxena's aesthetic analyses of the performing arts he handles is his intimate acquaintance with the arts by way of direct experience and understanding of all their technicalities—an experience and understanding undoubtedly rare in contemporary critical practice.

The central thesis of the book is the application of Susanne Langer's philosophy of art(as a symbolic form of human feeling) to the analyses of both Hindustani music and Kathak dance. In the first section he outlines some of the essential features of Langer's theory of art. In the next two chapters he discusses music along Langer's ideas and in the last chapter Kathak dance is interpreted along the same line.

As everybody knows, Langer is a devout follower of Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic form on which she draws her philosophy of art—"expression of conceived feeling". Saxena elaborates upon Langer's idea of art as expression by answering three major questions: What does expression mean? What is it that art may truly be said to express? How exactly does expression becomes artistic?

The Art Symbol, for Langer, is different from the symbols it builds upon not only in respect of what they mean, but also in respect of how they mean—the object and the way both are to be considered. In this respect art symbols do not function like word symbols: what they mean is something beyond what they present in themselves. But the art symbol "does not stand for something else nor refer to anything that exists apart from it...Its import is seen in it; not like the meaning of a genuine symbol, by means of it but separate from the sign." To put it precisely, in an art symbol the signifier and the signified are identified. In fact, this is the very gist of Pata®jali's view of the Vedic language as it is different from the common language(Sanskrit). Common language(*laukika bhcsc*) is empirical whereas the Vedic language is transcendental in the sense that in the common language the signifier stands for the signified arbitrarily—no natural relationship is there between them as they stand in their conventional relationship. But the representational system in the Vedic language is natural not in any iconic pattern, but in an organic one where the representation is the represented itself. Thus Bhart'hari's notion of Sabdabrahman might be construed as a model of Langer's view of Art Symbol.

The living or organic form and expressive form are closely related in Langer's theory as she writes: "(A poem is) not a report or comment, but a constructed form; if it is a good poetic work it is an *expressive form* in the same way that a work of plastic art is expressive form." But here arises a major disagreement of the philosophers who define art in terms of ontology. Particularly, Abhinavagupta the most celebrated critic of classical India vehemently opposes the equation of poetic art with the plastic art. In his commentary on Bharata's notion of the theatrical performances he distinguishes among plastic arts, verbal art and performing arts like the theatre, music and dance. He strongly argues that they cannot be defined in any single term since they vary radically in their ontological status. Reasonably enough, the Aristotelian sister arts theory has been rejected by the recent ontologists(including Abhinava). Dance and music cannot be interpreted in terms of any common symbolic(semiotic) system, because semiotics of physical gestures cannot be ontologically equivalent to the semiotics of vocal modulations.

Nevertheless, theoretical inaccuracy apart, what is most admirably noted in Saxena's analysis is his remarkable skill in the first hand knowledge of the technical titbits and its interpretation in the light of modernist expressionism with particular reference to Langer and her associates. One can confidently assert that no better book can be written on the subject along the theoretical lines the author has adopted. Finally, it won't be irrelevant to point out that although Langer's symbolic expressionism is the central theoretical thrust, the book cries for references to such eminent recent musicologists as Roger Scruton, Peter Kivy, Stephen Davies and Robert Sharpe.

Shrikrishna(Babanrao) Haldankar, *Aesthetics of Agra and Jaipur Traditions* (Translated by Padmaja Punde and the Author), Mumbai: Popular Prakashan, 2001, pp.139.

In the glorious traditions of Hindustani music two dominant gharanas—of Jaipur and Agra—have always attracted the attention of lovers and critics of musicology and musical performances. A full-length study of these gharanas was an urgent need for the English readers. Haldankar's English translation of his Marathi text now meets this need.

Regarding the genesis of the gharanas, i.e., the Khayal style of singing(gayaki), the author traces its origin to the seventeenth/eighteenth century. The founder of Agra gharana is Sujan Singh alias Haji Sujan Khan, an eminent musician of Akbar's court, although Nayak Gopal leads the list, whereas Nath Vishwambhar leads the Jaipur gharana next to which Swami Haridas the eminent saint-singer of Brindaban(guru of Mirabai) is mentioned. It is now somewhat clear that the gharanas are the Mughlai modifications of the Classical Indian Raga traditions. The author admits that the gharanas are the styles not of any fixed character. They have been quite flexible(healthily?) as also enriched in course of time. Flexibility of a cultural phenomenon (for example, language) has been appreciated as its liveliness, whereas any fixity is the sign of death. But in case of a highly elevated art form like the classical Raga music, it is very difficult to state how far the Mughlai modifications have *enriched* this tradition notwithstanding its novelty due to the very variations. Thumri is undoubtedly more a mode of entertainment than a form of aesthetic excellence found in the classical Ragas which were originally explored as the modes of spiritual experience(*nadabrahma*), not any medium of courtly entertainment. As the legend says, Mirabai refused to sing to Akbar, since, she said, she was not any courtly singer.

In the chapter on the aesthetics in(sic) music the author's statement that music is the most abstract of all arts is subject to severe critical attack. Presumably he thinks painting is more concrete than music, although modernist painting bears signs of abstractionism. But the ancient Indian masters have considered music as the most concrete of all arts since it is a form of Yogic practice by which one directly experiences the Absolute Reality. The author commits a further serious blunder when he states(p.6) that the experience of music is akin to the pleasure derived from poetry: "...like poetry, the pleasure derived from music is experienced throughout its expression." The statement is simply meaningless without any argument forwarded either by the Indian masters or by the modern Western musicologists. Music and poetry are completely two different media of expressing emotion, and therefore the modes of their experience by the audience are also different. Points of difference are too many to be enumerated here. The author himself is aware of some of the striking features of music when he says: " When an artist portrays a raga he strings together certain notes thereby creating a musical structure." He is also very much aware of the peculiarities of music in presenting the emotive character of a raga.

The theoretical lacunae apart, the book contains excellent descriptions of the two gharanas it handles in both their historical and structural perspectives. The reader gains a wealth of information on the subject matter concerned, although a select bibliography is extremely wanting.

Martha C. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*, Cambridge: The University Press, 2000, pp.312.

Women have been so highly esteemed in the ancient India that an orthodox Indian scholar would never accept the relevance of feminism in the cultural context of this country. Mythical women characters such as – Javala, Anasuya, Lopamudra, Gargi besides Sita, Draupadi and Savitri have been so illustrious that their male counterparts have been often overshadowed. Such great intellectuals in Indian history as Panini and Patanjali are often identified not by their fathers but by their mothers Daksi and Gonika respectively. The philosophical schools of Sankhya and Tantra have so highly idealized/ idolized the feminine sex in their notions of Prakriti and Sakti that a modern scholar of Indology reasonably hesitates to respond to the outcall of feminism developed in the Western cultural studies. Considering at least this aspect of Indian culture the universality of feminism is suspected. But Martha Nussbaum's studies reflected in the present volume compels an orthodox Indian scholar to rethink seriously what he has been thinking throughout. Her studies indeed seductively convince her readers that against the backdrop of all the idealist and abstract theories of philosophy and economics, there does exist a strong concrete and realistic ground for the relevance of feminism in India. Considered from her points of view the universality of feminism needs urgent approval.

Focusing her attention on the conditions of women in the developing countries in general and in India in particular the author argues that political and economic principles in the international level must take up the issue of gender difference as a problem of justice under the strong guidance of philosophy. Her idea of feminism is based on the idea of human capabilities: what people are actually capable of doing or becoming in the real world. The capabilities approach which she applies in this study is her own version of the issue differing from those of the philosophers and economists including Aristotle, Marx, Mill and Amartya Sen. Gender inequality in India is a proverbial phenomenon: " A daughter born/ To husband or death? She is already gone". Or another proverb from Oriya culture: A daughter born is meant for other's family". Of course, ideologically, these proverbs have a strong positive aspect. But in the developing countries like India ideologies are always abused or misused. It is this ideology which in its degenerated or abused form is responsible for the wretched conditions of all the categories of women in a community or society such as housewives, women working in farms, industries and in all the private and public sectors. Housewives are not taken care of properly. Nor are the working women treated properly by the male bosses. Besides, there are also criminal activities like rape. These are all very common features in the developing countries. "I focus throughout on the case of India, a nation in which women suffer great inequalities despite a promising constitutional tradition," writes Nussbaum. In the four chapters of the book she offers a wealth of data-based reports, case studies, arguments, theorizations and analyses on a wide-ranging cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary ground.

In the first chapter she uses her own idea of human capability in mapping and defending the approach to the basic political principles concerned. Next she explains the relationship of this approach to the idea of fundamental human rights discussing certain crucial political and economic

issues such as preference, welfairism, desire justification, political stability and depth of habit. The next two chapters investigate two major problem areas such as religion and family, the issues like rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence coming under these two major areas. The most interesting feature of the book seems to be the conclusion where Nussbaum relieves the heavy burden of the intellectual exercises of the earlier chapters in a lyrical experience: "Women why are you crying? Your tears should become your thought" She thinks that her capability approach has demonstrated a solution to the gender problems in India and other countries by pointing out that whereas earlier, women were crying to list all the miseries of their life, now, they cry to transform their tears to their thoughts and plans: "The capabilities approach in the systemization and theorization of just such thoughts and plans". Outside its context Nussbaum makes us aware that it is the awareness of one's own capabilities that redeems one's own suffering. Indeed this philosophical achievement reminds us the archetypal slogan of the Vedas." Know Thyself"(*ćtmćnam viddhi*) correlating with another saying that this self(*ćtman*) is the ultimate reality(*ayamćtmć brahma*).

A.C.Sukla
Sambalpur University

Dipesh Chakraborty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, pp.301.

Chakraborty's book is a brilliant example of creative historiography. A member of the *Subaltern Studies* group, one among its other illustrious members like Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, the author has consistently tried to rethink historiography by decentralizing the political, intellectual and linguistic hegemony of Europe, by deconstructing the Eurocentrism that dominated the colonial era.

"European history is no longer seen as embodying anything like a 'universal human history'". He quotes Gadamer, "Europe...since 1914 has become provincialised...." and Naoki Sakai, "The West is a name for a subject which gathers itself in discourse but is also an object constituted discursively; it is, evidently, a name always associating itself with those regions, communities, and peoples that appear politically superior to other regions, communities and peoples. Basically, it is just like the name 'Japan'...It claims that it is capable of sustaining, if not actually transcending, an impulse to transcend all the particularizations."

Thus the author clarifies, the book is not about the region called 'Europe', because this Europe has already lost its integrated image in its being particularized."The so-called "European age" in modern history began to yield place to other regional and global configurations toward the middle of the twentieth century."(p.1)

The plan of the book, as the author clarifies, is not to reject the European thought. "European is at once both indispensable and inadequate in helping us to think through the experiences of political modernity in non-Western nations, and provincializing Europe becomes the task of exploring how this thought—which is now everybody's heritage and which affects us all –may be renewed from and for the margins."(p.16) The book rather takes the advantage of an artificial and faulty division between analytic and hermeneutic traditions in the modern European social thought; and tries to bring two

important representatives of European thought Marx and Heidegger into a conversation in the context of making South Asian political modernity meaningful. The first part(Chaps. 1-4) deals with the topic called "Historicism and the Narration of Modernity" reflecting on the relationship of Marxist ideas of history and historical time with the narratives of capitalist modernity in colonial India. The second part entitled "Histories of Belonging"(chaps.5-8) is organized under Heideggerian ideas presenting certain themes in the modernity of upper caste Hindus of India, particularly of Bengal. Though confined to a particular region, i.e., Bengal the themes are universal in structuring political modernity: "the idea of the citizen-subject, imagination as a category of analysis, ideas regarding civil society, patriarchal fraternities, public/private distinctions, secular reason, historical time and so on."(p.19) The first part deals with the "subaltern", i.e., historical and ethnographic studies of peasants and tribals whereas the second part reflects the history of educated elite with reference to the Bengalis. The concluding chapter envisages a double task: "it acknowledges the political need to think in terms of totalities while all the time unsettling totalizing thought by putting into play non-totalizing categories".(p.21-22) The Heideggerian framework of this chapter holds together the secularist – historicist and the non-secularist and non-historicist engaging the diverse ways of "being-in-the-world".

The theoretical depth and dimension of the book, as noted above, are undoubtedly original exploring new vistas for historical and cultural studies. The author's shrewdness in exploiting the Heideggerian notion of "fragmentariness" for explanation of the historical and political phenomena is undoubtedly unique. The second part of the book carries most relevant themes and events illustrating the ideas the author takes up as the central ones. The barrier between history and literary criticism is lifted up, and the reader is absorbed into an aesthetic awareness where the historicity of history merges into the generality(sadhara'ya) of literary narrative. Although some might point to the Bengali clanism of the author, objectively viewing, there are sufficient grounds for agreeing with him that the Bengali atmosphere of the book is transformed into the Indian colonial atmosphere in general. A reader does not feel that he is dragged into any clanism unwantedly. Historically speaking, colonial modernity began and flourished more in Bengal than in any other region of India. Both colonial and anti-colonial attitudes were rich in Bengali culture. Therefore in illustrating the theories that Chakrabarty expounds, the data from Bengali culture are quite indispensable. The chapters five and seven offer insightful readings of the literary and social concepts like adda, kalamka, pabitra in different literary texts and social sites. History is no more a boring phenomenon or an Aristotelian record of possible and particular events and facts. We are compelled to change our historical views as well as our views of history.

Dipesh Chakraborty presents us a book which it is very difficult to write, whereas very easy and enjoying to read.

B.C.Dash
Barpeta College, Assam

Michael P. Clark(Ed.), *Revenge of the Aesthetic: The Place of Literature in Theory Today*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp.251.

The present volume collects ten essays by the most illustrious and influential critics exercising during the last three decades: Hazard Adams, Stanley Fish, J. Hillis Miller, Murray Krieger, Jacques Derrida, David Carrol, Stephen Nichols, Ernst Behler, Davis Donoghue, Wolfgang Iser and Wesley

Morris. The editor explains the principle of coherence he has followed in collecting these essays by several hands: "The essays in this volume argue for the importance of aesthetic values and formal characteristics specific to literary texts." In explaining the title of the volume he quotes Krieger: "The aesthetic can have its revenge upon ideology by revealing a power to complicate that is also a power to undermine"... "It grouped together some influential theorists who often had little in common apart from an interest in the constitutive role of linguistic functions in human experience, and a corollary rejection of humanistic touchstones such as 'Man' and most philosophical absolutes and metaphysical foundations."

In the introductory chapter the editor provides a comprehensive account of the history of literary theory since the World War II, since the contextualist formalism of the American New Criticism till date through the deconstructive trend of post-structuralism. Along with this historical account he also stresses the centrality of Murray Krieger's critical contributions to the debate about the status of literary and aesthetic form. He mentions that he has deliberately chosen the critics of this volume who "insist on some form of dialectical relation between work and world that confounds simplistic distinctions between these two realms, and that contests the facile elevation of either work or world as the determining factor of literary experience", despite the great variety in their topics and the historical range of their examples.

According to the editor, Krieger has consistently focused on the ironic nature of literary illusion as the key element that distinguishes the unique status of literary work and that constitutes its importance to the world of lived experience. Literary work, says Krieger, presents an illusion of and to the world; but unlike the dogmatic proclamations of ideology, literature presents illusion as illusion." In doing so literature projects its relation to the world as well as the status of all other illusions that would appear as truth.

Stanley Fish deals with this work-world relationship by interpreting Andrew Marvell. He argues that Marvell's poetry might be read as an "art of disappearance" in both reforming and rejecting the world of which it is a part. This reading suggests a theory that literature is suspended between "poetic freedom and worldly constraint." Fish's reading of 'ambivalence' in Marvell might be compared with Krieger's "self-confessing illusion" of poetry in general, as Hazard Adams shows it. This relationship between the aesthetic form and the world concerns every other contributor of the volume. Wolfgang Iser thinks that human experience is situated in between these two, and that situation is the focus of what Iser describes as "literary anthropology". Iser agrees with Krieger that literary fictions represent the world only as if it were present to the author and reader. Also, literary fictions "deliberately disclose their fictionality"—they "function as a means of disordering and disrupting their extra textual field of reference," creating gaps rather than bridging them. Derrida thinks, as Krieger has described, that bearing witness to an event has much in common with the poetic experience of language. The poetic experience is characterized by poem's capacity "to play the unmasking role—the role of revealing mask(or illusion) *as* mask. This act of revealing becomes successfully poetic. For Derrida this paradoxical relation of the poem to the act of its own formation, which is its poetics, establishes the specificity of a poem and, at the same time, leads the poem onto something beyond its linguistic confines—to the other, to whom the poem is addressed, as also to the world.

Wesley Morris thinks that the failure of aesthetic forms to close their relation to the world is the product of a symbiotic relation between modernism and postmodernism. He argues that anti-

formalism was irrevocably bound to the organic formalism it opposed. Hence both the movements—modernism and postmodernism are profoundly anti-historical in their rejection of the materiality of the world and the pressures of the past that emerges out of it. Denis Donogue argues for an alternative to spatial models of form, an alternative he derives from Paul de Man's elevation of allegory over symbol as the defining trope of poetic language.

In the final chapter Krieger himself offers an autobiographical account—both a prospect and a retrospect—of his critical career which he started as a very young army returnee just after the World War II. He writes: "So, I look back at where I have been and think of where I am. I am still claiming that the aesthetic—together with the literary read within its terms—performs a number of indispensable functions and our culture. Like Wolfgang Iser, I claim for the literary a primary anthropological function in helping us see and feel beneath our systematic and generalized languages, and thus in protecting us from being misled by them".

To bring a galaxy of representative critics under the framework of a single critical principle, i.e., of Murray Krieger's, without any possible controversy or misunderstanding is not a joke. The editor Clark has performed such a very risky job, without any risk. He therefore commands our gratitude for exhibiting a dominating critical phenomenon in the contemporary climate which would have been overlooked otherwise.

Sanjay Sarangi
Anchalik Mahavidyalaya
Birasal

Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Art of the Modern Age: Philosophy of Art from Kant to Heidegger* (Translated by Steven Rendall), Princeton:Princeton University Press, 2000, pp.352.

The French have reflected on art in terms of two apparently contradictory phenomena: the first is a singular aggravation of the legitimation or identity crisis and the second phenomenon is the renewed interest in Kantian aesthetics. In the six chapters including the concluding one the book traces the emergence of a speculative theory of art from Kant to Heidegger through Novalis, Schlegel, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Neitsche. The trend originates in Novalis' statement that poetry is the sublimation of metaphysics. According to Novalis poetry was called upon to replace philosophy in decline, a statement that reminds Arnold's statement that poetry is a substitute for religion. Novalis dwindles between three theses: (1) philosophy must transcend itself in poetry, (2) it must form a synthesis with poetry, (3) poetry must replace philosophy. The definition of poetry is intimately connected with a theory of the productive imagination—imagination or einbildungskraft being the unification power of mind, the esemplastic function of mind can replace all other senses.The romantic theory of literature constitutes the initial step in the construction of a speculative theory of art. In Schlegel's definition of art, "Generally we include within literature all the sciences and all the arts that act through language: poetry the oratorical art, and history as well, insofar as its presentation is part of the oratorical art...Poetry the oratorical art and history and philosophy are part of the genre that acts through language." Hegel also defines art "both as a speculative enterprise opposed to the prosaic knowledge of the understanding and as an ecstatic being-in-the-world opposed to the empirical being-in-the-art. But there is a difference between art and reason—between art and Pure Thought or philosophical speculation. As the unity of the sensuous and the spiritual art arises from a two-fold

impulse: sensuous reality which enters into the artwork as an appearance only, not as materiality and weight, is transformed into an ideal sensibility which is spiritualized: "Art liberates the true content of phenomena from the pure appearance and deception of this bad, transitory world, and gives them a higher actuality, born of the spirit." As a romantic theory, Hegel's theory of art is an aesthetics of content. The unity of art is guaranteed by the universality of its content, which is common to all the arts. Because of the speculative character of art, hence because of its participation in the sphere of absolute spirit, this content is the same as the philosophy and religion. The difference among these three—art, philosophy and religion—is a difference due to diversity of semiotic forms, the common content being the Idea, the Absolute Being.

Schopenhauer deviates from Kant insofar as he seeks to found a philosophical doctrine of beauty, which was denied by Kant for whom Beauty is not an ontologically stable phenomenon. Thus Schopenhauer says to his students that he does not propose an aesthetics but a metaphysics of Beauty. So also is the view of Nietzsche who considers art as fundamentally a metaphysical act. Neitzsche offers not a single, but almost four definitions of art: (1) a cognitive definition : art is an ecstatic knowledge of the inner being of the world, of its Dionysian heart; (2) an effective-ethical definition: art is a consolation that allows us to go on living; (3) an ontological definition: art is a semblance, an illusion; (4) a cosmological definition: art is the game that the universe plays with itself. The difficulty in Neitzsche's theory of art is the identification of two opposite varieties of art—the Dionysian(music) and the Appolonian(representational arts).

Heidegger's general philosophy does not share with the early German romantic idealist philosophy. Heidegger distinguishes between metaphysics and "the thought of Being". He develops his conception of the work of art in a framework of distinction between the thing, equipment and the work. The work of art occupies a privileged place that has the ability to reveal Being; the being-work brings about the truth of the Being of beings including its own. Through a circular procedure Heidegger arrives at the central thesis of the speculative theory.

In the concluding chapter the author states that artistic modernity is inseparable from the conceptual framework provided by the speculative theory of art—may it origin in romanticism or symbolism. In fact Rene Wellek has long back traced the characteristics of modernism in symbolism, and the inherent idealism of modernism is reflected in several other activities of this era such as language studies, philosophy and literary theories and aesthetics as displayed in Cassirer, Langer and the Anglo-American New Critics, the Chicago critics and even in Northrop Frye. This inherent idealism is destroyed by Derrida who claims that he has gone far away from Heidegger in pioneering deconstruction of logocentrism. The destruction of an Idea or Logos has been the major function of the postmodern era. This iconoclasm is reflected in a very powerful wing of postmodernism which is named as postcolonialism that challenges any kind of hegemony in cultural activities such as literature, politics, economics and all other sociological relationship.

Schaeffer's book works out in all details an analysis and history of speculative theory of art that developed during the romantic and post-romantic modern age.

K.C. Dash,
BJB College, Bhubaneswar.

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